

THE AGES OF FAITH

POPULAR RELIGION IN LATE MEDIEVAL ENGLAND AND WESTERN EUROPE

NORMAN TANNER

I.B.TAURIS

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Introduction

From my years at Ampleforth College, Yorkshire, I enjoyed an interest in the late medieval Church, profiting from the excellent teaching of history by Thomas Charles-Edwards, Hugh Aveling, William Price (Headmaster), Basil (subsequently Cardinal) Hume and Anthony Davidson. Having entered the Society of Jesus in 1961, I was privileged to have some fine courses in medieval philosophy, taught mainly by the eminent Frederick Copleston, during three years of Licentiate studies in Philosophy at Heythrop College, then in Oxfordshire. Oxford University, where I took the BA in History and D.Phil in Church History as a member of Campion Hall, was exceptionally strong in the teaching of medieval history. I am particularly grateful for the inspiring teaching of James Campbell and Peter Lewis, who tutored me for various papers on England, France and Europe in the late Middle Ages, and Gillian Lewis and James O'Higgins, who tutored for the subsequent period, and to William Pantin, the supervisor of my D.Phil thesis, which was published, substantially unaltered, as *The Church in Late Medieval Norwich 1370–1532* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1984). Three years studying theology, in preparation for ordination to the Roman Catholic priesthood, resulted in the B.Theol. at the Gregorian University in Rome. This time allowed me a precious opportunity to delve deeper into medieval theology and to come to know at first hand the capital city of the medieval Church. These early studies and experiences form an essential background to the essays and articles in the present collection.

For 25 years (1978–2003) I taught medieval history – focusing principally on the late medieval Church – at Oxford University, with the posts of Tutor at Campion Hall and (1997–2003) University Research Lecturer. For most of this time I was also Lecturer (part-time) in Medieval Church History at Heythrop College, University of London, as well as Visiting Lecturer /

Professor – usually teaching medieval Church History or the councils of the Church – in various institutions abroad. It was during this time that most of the articles in the collection were written. In 2003 I was appointed Professor of Church History at the Gregorian University in Rome.

The articles in the book are collected under four headings: Church Councils, Norwich, England and Europe. The first group comprises various articles that grew out of my work as editor of *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* (2 vols., 1990), which included the decrees of the ecumenical (or general) councils of the Western Church during the Middle Ages and the sixteenth century. No 1 in the present collection, 'Medieval Crusade Decrees and Ignatius's Meditation on the Kingdom,' examines the possible influence of medieval councils upon the 'Meditation on the Kingdom,' in the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola. No. 2, 'Reception of the First Seven Ecumenical Councils by Medieval and Later General Councils of the Western Church', studies how the Western Church, ever since the schism of 1054, has continued to root itself in the Eastern Councils of the first millennium. No. 3, 'Pastoral Care: The Fourth Latern Council of 1215', examines the zeal and methodology of the most comprehensive council of the medieval West. Nos. 4 and 5 survey two major councils of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries: Florence, which is known principally for the attempted reunion between the Catholic and Orthodox churches; and Trent, the council that profoundly influenced the life and thought of Roman Catholicism for four centuries. All five essays fit into the renewed interest in church councils in recent years, stimulated in part by the Roman Catholic Church's surprisingly successful modern council. Vatican II (1962–5).

The second group of articles, on Norwich, develops themes to be found in *The Church in Late Medieval Norwich 1370–1532.* No. 6, 'The Reformation and Regionalism: Further Reflections on the Church in Late Medieval Norwich' looks at two issues. First, the paradox that a city noted for its thriving religious life in the late Middle Ages nevertheless embraced the Reformation with apparent enthusiasm. Secondly, does the case of Norwich suggest that regionalism was more important than nationalism in the English Church during this period? No. 7, 'Religious Practice in Norwich', forms a chapter in the recent *Medieval Norwich* (2004), edited by Carole Rawcliffe and Richard Wilson. It unfolds around the provocative suggestion that Norwich might be considered the 'most religious city' in late medieval Europe. Both essays fit into recent fascination with the late medieval Church, and revisionist tendencies in the relevant studies, whereby a much more sympathetic evaluation has replaced the earlier picture of a decadent Church and of impending

doom that led almost inevitably to the Protestant Reformation and Catholic Counter-Reformation.

The third group comprises various other articles on England. No. 8, 'Sources for Popular Religion in Late Medieval England' was originally delivered at the International Congress on Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo, Michigan, in May 1993 and was subsequently published in the Italian journal *Ricerche di Storia Sociale e Religiosa*. It surveys the notable developments in our knowledge of this field of study in the course of the twentieth century. No. 9, 'Penances Imposed on Kentish Lollards by Archbishop Warham, 1511–12', looks at a relatively neglected area in recent studies of Lollards: the punishments short of the death penalty that were imposed upon them. The Archbishop of Canterbury devised an array of imaginative penances that were designed to fit the alleged crimes of the miscreants and to deter other people from following their examples. No. 10, 'Crying "God for Harry! England and St George!"', was published as the late medieval contribution to the *Church Times* series on the history of the English church, 'Not Angles, but Anglicans'. The article emphasizes both England's active participation within Western Christendom during the period, and the distinctive national contribution made by the English church. No. 11 'The Study of English Medieval Recluses in the Twentieth Century', which was published in the *Festschrift* for Professor Yasuo Deguchi of Japan, looks at one distinctive and creative dimension of Christianity in late medieval England, the abundance of hermits and anchorites: Julian of Norwich, Richard Rolle and many others. The three parts of No. 12, 'Canon Law in England', 'Hermits and Anchorites' and 'Popular Religion', were articles in *Reader's Guide to British History,* edited by David Loades. They provide bibliographical guides to recent literature on three topics that feature prominently in the present collection. No. 13 'Piety in the Later Middle Ages in England' formed a chapter in *A History of Religion in Britain* (1994), edited by S. Gilley and W.J. Sheils. It provides a generally optimistic survey of the vivacity and creativity of Christianity in late medieval England – an assessment that expands on the positive evaluation already noted for Norwich.

The fourth group comprises various short articles on Europe, most of them originally published in the Jesuit periodical *The Month*. No. 14, 'Private Life and the Middle Ages', which is a review of the English translation of volume 3 of *Histoire de la Vie Privée*, edited by P. Ariès and G. Duby, explores the fundamentally communitarian and public nature of all life in medieval Europe. No. 15, 'Medieval Christendom and the Restoration of a Christian Society', proposes that while there is much to learn from medieval Christendom,

attempts to reproduce it again today represent a fatal temptation. No. 16, 'Do North Americans Understand the Middle Ages Better than Europeans?', which was published in *America* magazine, reflects on the remarkable success of the annual gathering at Kalamazoo, mentioned above. In arguing that the success of 'Kalamazoo' may be attributed to the innate symbiosis of north Americans with the Middle Ages, and that this symbiosis is much less prevalent among Europeans, the article had the undesired affect of irritating both American and British readers: the former for suggesting they were 'medieval' people, the latter for seemingly denying the continuity of their cultural heritage. No. 17, 'Sin in the Middle Ages', argues that medieval people were refreshingly frank about their faults, and that we could do well to learn from their openness. No. 18, 'Making Merry in the Middle Ages', urges the upbeat nature of medieval life, that indeed 'all life was sport, in a sense'. No. 19, 'Christianity *versus* Paganism? Reflections on Medieval Europe', criticizes as exaggerated the attention given to paganism in *The Pagan Middle Ages*, the collection of essays edited by Ludo Milis, on the grounds that the book too quickly labels as paganism what in fact – following the doctrine of the Incarnation – is integral to Christianity. Finally, no. 20, 'Inquisition and Holy Office', offers a brief survey of the Catholic Church's correction of religious dissidence through the centuries.

The articles taken together constitute, it may be hoped, a significant contribution to the study of religion in late medieval England and western Europe, from a variety of angles, and to some other topics of wider geographical and chronological scope. They may be regarded as being both in continuity with a long tradition of scholarship and in contact with more recent developments and reinterpretations. I am very pleased that I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd has undertaken the publication of this book.

The writing of the articles has spanned some 20 years. During this time a number of publications have appeared that would lead to some updates in the articles, though the resulting changes would, I think, be on points of details rather than the main lines of argument. Instead of attempting to indicate the desired updates within the articles themselves, I mention here some of the most relevant recent publications.

The most important is *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by H.G.C. Matthew and Brian Harrison, (60 vols., Oxford University Press, 2004). This monumental work provides revised biographies of many people appearing in the present volume. Other major works of reference, published within the last decade, should be mentioned: *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, edited by F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone (3rd edn. revised,

Oxford, 2005); *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* (revised 3rd edn., 2006); *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (2nd edn. 2003); *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, (9 vols., completed in 1999); *Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages*, edited by A. Vauchez, B. Dobson and M. Lapidge, (2 vols., Cambridge, 2000). On particular topics: R. Cross, *Duns Scotus* (Oxford, 1999) supplies the 'major study of Scotus' mentioned on p. 81; the Lichfield court book (p. 99) has been edited and translated into English: S. McSheffrey and Norman Tanner (eds.), *Lollards of Coventry 1486–1522*, Camden Fifth Series, xxiii (London, 2003); Anne Hudson and Pamela Gradon's edition of the Lollard/Wycliffite sermon cycle (p. 84) is now complete; David King, *The Medieval Stained Glass of St Peter Mancroft, Norwich* (Oxford, 2006) supplements note 48 on page 207.

I am most grateful to the various owners of copyright for permission to reprint the articles. The permissions are indicated at the beginning of the notes for each chapter; see below, pp. 201–19.

Chapter 1

Medieval Crusade Decrees and Ignatius's Meditation on the Kingdom

In recent years a number of writers have noted the influence of medieval crusades upon the spirituality of Ignatius of Loyola.[1] Undoubtedly they have made an important contribution to our understanding of his medieval background. Nevertheless their remarks have remained at a fairly general level. That is to say, they have found it difficult to specify the precise nature of the connection: to say whether, as Wolter remarks, certain elements in Ignatius's spirituality truly derived from the medieval crusade ideal or rather represent other 'elements . . . in the mainstream of traditional Christian spirituality', reaching him 'through other channels (monastic, Franciscan, or those of the *Devotio Moderna*)',[2] and secondly to specify, in so far as the influence of the crusades did exist, upon which aspects of this tradition it rested.

Let me begin by outlining briefly their conclusions, and those of other historians, so far. First and most obviously, there is no doubt about the importance of crusades in the medieval West. In the late Middle Ages and the sixteenth century, moreover, the original aim of the expeditions – the recapture of Jerusalem and the Holy Land – remained a strong motive force, even though the realization of this military objective became increasingly unlikely, so that in practice crusades often took on other forms, such as the defence of Christendom from further Muslim advances, or wars against heretics within Christendom, or even were interiorized and spiritualized into pilgrimages to shrines or into 'journeys of the soul'. Secondly there were two factors which gave special significance to crusades in the Spain of Ignatius's lifetime, namely: the centuries-long war to expel Muslims from the Iberian peninsula which reached its culmination with the capture in 1492 of Granada, the last

Muslim stronghold; and 'the spirit of a world-wide crusade' which resulted from Charles V's empire in Europe as well as from Spain's leading role in the discovery of the New World.[3] Thirdly, it was not just the element of 'conquest for Christ' that was involved in these various enterprises; there was also the relationship between leader and followers, a particular development of what may loosely be called the feudal relationship between a lord and his vassals.[4] Finally, there are Ignatius's more personal involvements in crusades. Thus one of his brothers met his death in the Spanish *Conquista* of America, another (or a cousin?) on crusade against the Turks in Hungary.[5] We know that Ignatius interested himself in the emperor Charles V's campaign in Africa to the extent of offering a plan for the fleet to his viceroy in Sicily, Juan de Vega.[6] There is his explicit approval of 'Crusade bulls' in his 'Rules for Thinking with the Church' in the *Spiritual Exercises*; his eagerness to visit the Holy Land, especially Jerusalem;[7] and so on.

It has proved difficult, nevertheless, to make more precise the connection between these background influences and Ignatius's thought, to point to particular sources which may have shaped his ideas. Thus Wolter argued on the one hand that, 'For an understanding of the genesis and nature of Ignatian spirituality a study of crusade spirituality as it existed in the West, especially on the Iberian peninsula, from early days right up to the days of Ignatius, is indispensable.'[8] But on the other hand he admitted the difficulties in finding documentary proof for his argument[9] and, as mentioned, in showing that various elements in Ignatius's spirituality derived from the crusade ideal rather than from other sources. So he had to conclude: 'We shall not be able to say any more than that an influence from the crusade spirituality is ascertainable . . . It is, so to speak, an influence from the climate of the times.'[10] It may well be, indeed, that in this matter the general ethos was more important for Ignatius than any written sources. After all, crusades were campaigns undertaken and experiences undergone, not books written, and the memory of them was handed down orally as much as through documentary evidence. Nevertheless it is surely right to look at the written sources, to investigate whether they may have been read by Ignatius or known to various people who influenced him, thus constituting either a direct or an indirect influence upon him.

The purpose of this article is to examine one particular class of documentary evidence relating to the crusades, namely the seven crusade decrees which were issued by the general councils of the Western Church during the Middle Ages,[11] in order to see whether they constitute a possible source for Ignatius's spirituality. I have been looking at these conciliar texts rather closely in my

recent work as editor of the English edition of the decrees of the ecumenical councils[12] and it has become clear to me that the parallels – as regards both general ethos and specific concepts and phraseology – between some of the decrees on the one hand and the spiritual vision of Ignatius on the other, especially as expressed in his meditation on the Kingdom in the *Spiritual Exercises*, are sufficiently striking to be worth bringing to public notice. As far as I am aware, these parallels have not been commented upon in detail before. Wolter noted one of the speeches made at Lateran V in 1513,[13] but he did not go on to examine the decrees of the council, nor did he look in detail at the crusade decrees of other medieval general councils. With other writers the references to conciliar texts are even more general.

There are two obvious gaps in my argument. First, I am unable to say precisely how likely it is that Ignatius read the crusade decrees or knew about them in any detail. Secondly, I find it hard to estimate the likelihood that those who influenced him read or knew about them. In these important matters I have little to add to what other writers on Ignatius's education and formation have already said.

Regarding the first question, there appears to be no particular likelihood that Ignatius would have encountered the decrees as part of his philosophical and theological studies at Paris university between 1528 and 1535, according to the outline of his studies presented to us by Villoslada, Rouquette, Schurhammer, Dalmases and Farge.[14] Moreover, if the text of the Kingdom meditation was essentially in place by 1528, as seems most probable, this would antedate his studies in Paris, though it remains possible that some of the phraseology of the meditation was finalized during his time in that city.[15] As for his earlier studies in Spain, again there seems no particular likelihood that he would have encountered the decrees as part of the formal curriculum.[16] But the question remains whether he might have looked at them outside his formal studies, either in Spain or in Paris. This possibility should not be discounted too easily, I think, especially since Ignatius evidently possessed an inquiring mind, but it depends to a considerable extent on how widespread among educated people knowledge of the decrees was and whether he knew them from an earlier date.

With regard to Ignatius's earlier life as a courtier, soldier and religious convert, the place of the crusades seems much more obvious as part of the general background of his life, as I mentioned earlier. It may well be that the influence remained at the level of general ethos and of chivalric and pious literature, without ever reaching detailed knowledge of crusade decrees. Thus, as far as I am aware, the decrees were not contained, or even

mentioned, in any of the books which Ignatius is known to have read during these years. Nevertheless it is possible that he came across them at some stage, especially during his dozen years as a member of the household of Juan Velázquez de Cuellar, the chief treasurer of Castile, who possessed a good library and whose position at the Spanish court would have brought him, and therefore to some extent Ignatius, into contact with ecclesiastical affairs both national and international.[17] If Ignatius knew them from this time, it seems likely that he would have looked at them again during his years of study.

The second gap concerns the likelihood that various ecclesiastics, teachers and others who influenced Ignatius may have read or known about the decrees. Extending the points which I have just made about Ignatius's own education, it appears unlikely that they would have encountered them within their official curriculum of studies at a university. Particularly relevant here is the fact that the *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, which formed the basis of university teaching in canon law and which contained many decrees of general councils, did not include the crusade decrees.[18] But would such persons have come across them outside the official curriculum? In other words, how well known were these decrees – to what extent did they form part of the general knowledge of educated people of the time? The answer to this question obviously has an important bearing on the likelihood that Ignatius himself knew about them outside his university studies, since he gradually became a well-educated man. The question, however, has not yet been adequately treated by any writer and I can only offer a few indications. As I have just mentioned, the *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, which was widely known even by those who were not professional canon lawyers, did not include the crusade decrees. With regard to their appearance in printed collections of conciliar decrees, those of Lateran V (1512–17) first appeared in 1521, in Rome,[19] but the possibly more significant one of Lateran IV (1215) not until 1538,[20] and the others at later dates.[21] As far as I am aware, moreover, they did not appear in other printed works earlier than those dates. Nevertheless we are speaking of texts which, as decrees of general councils, were of major importance and which, for the most part, are known to have had quite a wide circulation in manuscript form.[22] For these reasons it does not seem fanciful to suggest that they were probably known to at least some people who influenced Ignatius and quite possibly also to Ignatius himself.

To turn now to the crusade decrees themselves, the first of the seven is canon 10 of Lateran I, which was held in 1123.[23] It is a brief statement of encouragement and protection for those who help towards the defence of

Jerusalem. It does not contain noticeable parallels with Ignatius's thought. The second, and most important, is decree 71 of Lateran IV in 1215.[24] This is a long and very full decree in preparation for the Fifth Crusade, which set out in 1217. It is specially significant for our purposes, partly because it contains the most striking similarities with ideas expressed by Ignatius and partly because it had a large influence upon the crusade decrees of subsequent general councils. Thus the next two decrees in question, constitutions II.5 of Lyons I in 1245 and I.1 of Lyons II in 1274,[25] borrow extensively from the Lateran IV decree and indeed frequently quote from it word for word. However, they add nothing to the latter as regards specific parallels with Ignatius's ideas. The fifth decree, which comes from the council of Vienne and is dated 1 December 1312,[26] is more independent of the Lateran IV decree than are those of Lyons I and II but it too does not provide any further detailed parallels with Ignatius's thought. The last two decrees come from Lateran V. The first was issued at the ninth session on 5 May 1514, and in the final decree of the council, which was passed at the twelfth and last session on 16 March 1517, there was a further substantial passage on the proposed crusade.[27] These two decrees are of course contemporaneous with Ignatius's lifetime, a few years before he was wounded at the siege of Pampluna in 1521 and underwent his religious conversion. Their proximity to the composition of the *Spiritual Exercises* makes them of considerable interest, but their specific similarities with Ignatius's thought are less striking than are those of the Lateran IV decree. It should also be noted that Lateran V was a relatively low-key council. It was called largely to outmanoeuvre the French-inspired anti-papal council which assembled at Pisa in 1511. Its results were slender and it never enjoyed the widespread reputation of Lateran IV or Lyons I and II or, later, the council of Trent. For these reasons the Lateran IV decree may well have had more influence upon Ignatius than the two decrees of Lateran V.

At this point I want to substantiate my arguments by quoting at length, in English translation, the relevant sections of the following three texts: (a) Ignatius's meditation on the Kingdom in the *Spiritual Exercises*; (b) Decree 71 of Lateran IV (italicized text, followed by numerals 1–7 in square brackets, indicate the seven); (c) the final decree of Lateran V.

(a) *Ignatius's Meditation on the Kingdom in the* Spiritual Exercises

> I imagine a temporal king, chosen by our Lord God, revered and obeyed by the rulers and all the common people of Christendom.

See how this king addresses all his followers, saying: I am determined to bring under my control the entire land of the unbeliever. Anyone, then, who wishes to join me must be satisfied to eat the food I eat, to drink what I drink, to dress as I dress; by day he will have to work alongside me, and take his turn with me at keeping a look-out by night; there will be other such things. But his share in my triumph will be proportionate to his share in my hardships.

Think what response loyal subjects must make to a king so generous and so understanding: equally, were one to refuse the appeal of such a king, how he would incur the reprobation of all people and be regarded as a disgraceful coward.

The second part of this exercise consists in relating this illustration of the earthly king to Christ our Lord, point for point.

If we cannot ignore such a challenge, issued to his followers by an earthly king, how much more worthy of our attention is that of Christ our Lord, the Eternal King, as he confronts the whole world: to each and all He issues His summons in these words: I am determined to bring under my control the whole world and all my enemies, and so to come to the glory of my Father. To anyone, then, who chooses to join me, I offer nothing but a share in my hardships; but if he follows me in suffering he will assuredly follow me in glory.

We realize that anyone possessed of right reason will offer himself totally for the task.[28]

(b) *Decree 71 of Lateran IV*

Expedition for the Recovery of the Holy Land

It is our [i.e., Pope Innocent III's] *ardent desire to liberate the Holy Land from infidel hands* [1]. We therefore declare, with the approval of this sacred council and on the advice of prudent men who are fully aware of the circumstances of time and place, that crusaders are to make themselves ready so that all who have arranged to go by sea shall assemble in the kingdom of Sicily on 1 June after next: some as necessary and fitting at Brindisi and others at Messina and places neighbouring it on either side, where we too have arranged to be in person at that time, God willing, so that with our advice and help the Christian army may be in good order to set out with divine and apostolic blessing. Those who have decided to go by land should also take care to be ready by the same date. They shall notify us

meanwhile so that we may grant them a suitable legate 'a latere' for advice and help. *Priests and other clerics who will be in the Christian army, both those under authority and prelates, shall diligently devote themselves to prayer and exhortation, teaching the crusaders by word and example to have the fear and love of God always before their eyes, so that they say or do nothing that might offend the Divine Majesty* [2]. *If they ever fall into sin, let them quickly rise up again through true penitence* [3]. *Let them be humble in heart and in body, keeping to moderation both in food and in dress* [4], *avoiding altogether dissensions and rivalries, and putting aside entirely any bitterness or envy* [5], *so that thus armed with spiritual and material weapons they may the more fearlessly fight against the enemies of the faith, relying not on their own power but rather trusting in the strength of God* [6]. We grant to these clerics that they may receive the fruits of their benefices in full for three years, as if they were resident in the churches, and if necessary they may leave them in pledge for the same time.

To prevent this holy proposal being impeded or delayed, we strictly order all prelates of churches, each in his own locality, diligently to warn and induce those who have abandoned the cross to resume it, and them and others who have taken up the cross, and those who may still do so, to carry out their vows to the Lord. And if necessary they shall compel them to do this without any backsliding, by sentences of excommunication against their persons and of interdict on their lands, excepting only those persons who find themselves faced with an impediment of such a kind that their vow deservedly ought to be commuted or deferred in accordance with the directives of the Apostolic See. In order that nothing connected with *this business of Jesus Christ* [1] be omitted, we will and order patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, abbots and others who have the care of souls to preach the cross zealously to those entrusted to them. Let them beseech kings, dukes, princes, margraves, counts, barons and other magnates, as well as the communities of cities, vills and towns – in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the one, only, true and eternal God – that those who do not go in person to the aid of the Holy Land should contribute, according to their means, an appropriate number of fighting men together with their necessary expenses for three years, for the remission of their sins in accordance with what has already been explained in general letters and will be explained below for still greater assurance. We wish to

share in this remission not only those who contribute ships of their own but also those who are zealous enough to build them for this purpose. *To those who refuse, if there happen to be any who are so ungrateful to our Lord God, we firmly declare in the name of the apostle that they should know that they will have to answer to us for this on the last day of final judgment before the fearful judge. Let them consider beforehand, however, with what conscience and with what security it was they were able to confess before the only-begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, to whom the Father gave all things into his hands, if in this business, which is as it were peculiarly his, they refuse to serve him who was crucified for sinners, by whose beneficence they are sustained and indeed by whose blood they have been redeemed* [7].

Lest we appear to be laying on men's shoulders heavy and unbearable burdens which we are not willing to lighten, like those who say yes but do nothing, behold we, from what we have been able to save over and above necessities and moderate expenses, grant and give thirty thousand pounds to this work, besides the shipping which we are giving to the crusaders of Rome and neighbouring districts. We will assign for this purpose, moreover, three thousand marks of silver, which we have left over from the alms of certain of the faithful, the rest having been faithfully distributed for the needs and benefit of the aforesaid Land by the hands of the abbot patriarch of Jerusalem, of happy memory, and of the masters of the Temple and of the Hospital. We wish, however, that other prelates of churches and all clerics may participate and share both in the merit and in the reward. We therefore decree, with the general approval of the council, that all clerics, both those under authority and prelates, shall give a twentieth of their ecclesiastical revenues for three years to the aid of the Holy Land, by means of the persons appointed by the Apostolic See for this purpose; the only exceptions being certain religious who are rightly to be exempted from this taxation and likewise those persons who have taken or will take the cross and so will go in person. We and our brothers, cardinals of the holy Roman Church, shall pay a full tenth [4]. Let all know, moreover, that they are obliged to observe this faithfully under pain of excommunication, so that those who knowingly deceive in this matter shall incur the sentence of excommunication. Because it is right that those who persevere in the service of the heavenly ruler should in all justice enjoy special privilege, and because the day of departure is somewhat more than a year ahead, crusaders shall therefore be exempt from taxes or levies and other burdens. We take their persons and goods under the

> protection of St Peter and ourself once they have taken up the cross. We ordain that they are to be protected by archbishops, bishops and all prelates of the Church, and that protectors of their own are to be specially appointed for this purpose, so that their goods are to remain intact and undisturbed until they are known for certain to be dead or to have returned. If anyone dares to act contrary to this, let him be curbed by ecclesiastical censure.[29]

The decree continues with passages on the relaxation of debts owed by crusaders, on corsairs and pirates and others who help the enemy, on the suspension of tournaments and the imposition of a general peace among Christians, and finally on the granting of indulgences to those who take part in the expedition or contribute towards it.[30]

(c) *Final decree of Lateran V*

This concluding decree, after outlining the various achievements of the council, comes to the topic of the crusade which had been proposed earlier in the council:

> We [i.e., Pope Leo X] decree, with the approval of the sacred council, that the said campaign against the infidels is to be undertaken and carried through. Zeal for the faith prompts us to this. It has been so often proposed and promised by us and our predecessor Julius in the sessions referred to, when the business of the council was being explained. On several occasions it was communicated to, and discussed with, spokesmen at our court representing kings and princes. Pope Nicholas V, our predecessor of pious memory, summoned a general expedition against the infidels after the disastrous fall of Constantinople in order to crush their fury and to avenge the wounds of Christ. Callistus III and Pius II, of happy memory, our predecessors as Roman pontiffs, urged on by zeal for the faith, followed in the same path with skill and energy. During a subsequent period of three years, we imitated them by means of an authorization from ourself and our said brothers for imposing and exacting a tithe on the revenues of churches, monasteries and other benefices throughout the world and for doing each and every other thing that is necessary and customary in a campaign of this kind. We continually pour forth holy, humble and earnest prayers to

> almighty God that the campaign may have a happy outcome. We order the same to be done by all Christ's faithful of either sex. We exhort Maximilian, the emperor elect, and kings, princes and Christian rulers, whose courage God bids us to rouse, beseeching them by the tender mercy of our God, Jesus Christ, and appealing to them by his fearful judgment to remember that they shall have to render an account of their defence and preservation – even by giving their lives – of the Church itself, which has been redeemed by Christ's blood, and to rise up in strength and power for the defence of the Christian faith, as is incumbent on them as a personal and necessary duty, with all mutual hatred being set aside and quarrels and conflicts among themselves being committed to everlasting oblivion. At this time of such great need, let them offer with eagerness their ready assistance in keeping with their resources. We urge with paternal affection and ask them that, at least during the campaign, out of reverence for almighty God and for the Apostolic See, they assure the unbroken observance of the peace into which they have entered, so that such an important good, which we hope and desire will be obtained with the help of the Lord's right hand, may not be impeded by some interruption from discord and dissension.[31]

The decree then ends with the formal closure of the council.[32]

There seem to me to be three areas of striking likeness – similarities which go beyond general outline to specific ideas and expressions – between the crusade decrees on the one hand, especially that of Lateran IV, and the Kingdom meditation on the other. These are numbered 1, 4 and 7 in the Lateran IV decree (above, pp.6–9). First, the summons to conquer (or liberate) the land of the unbelievers. The king in the Kingdom meditation proclaims, 'I am determined to bring under my control the entire land of the unbeliever', and Christ declares, 'I am determined to bring under my control the whole world and all my enemies'; the decree of Lateran IV, speaking in the name of Pope Innocent III, states, 'It is our ardent desire to liberate the Holy Land from infidel hands.' Secondly, the combination of restraint in food, dress and behaviour and the motif of followers and leader sharing alike in the toils of the undertaking so that one day they may enjoy together the rewards of victory; strong personal bonds of loyalty springing out of mutual affection and common ideals; a clear distinction of roles but at the same time deep mutual respect. This point is also brought out in the granting of indulgences at the

end of the decree. Thirdly, the theme of, 'Shame upon those who refuse the appeal!' Thus in the Kingdom meditation, 'Think . . . equally, were one to refuse the appeal of such a king, how he would incur the reprobation of all people and be regarded as a disgraceful coward'; and the even stronger words of the Lateran IV decree. In addition, there seems to me to be quite a striking overall similarity of structure between the Kingdom meditation and the Lateran IV decree.

Although the similarities are revealed most strikingly in the Kingdom meditation, they are of course not confined to that meditation but are to be found elsewhere in the *Spiritual Exercises* and in other writings of Ignatius. Equally, there are other elements in the crusade decrees that are not mentioned explicitly in the Kingdom meditation but are nevertheless strong features of Ignatius's spirituality. Among these elements one might note the following four, all of which appear in the Lateran IV decree (they are numbered 5, 6, 2 and 3 respectively above, pp. 6–9). First, there is the need for harmony among the crusaders and peace among Christians generally (this point is treated more extensively in the later section of the decree on the suspension of tournaments and the imposition of a general peace among Christians); this need is paralleled by Ignatius's advocacy of a union of hearts and minds among Christians and especially among Jesuits. Secondly, the recommendation that the crusaders are to be 'armed with spiritual and material weapons . . . relying not on their own power but rather trusting in the strength of God' is paralleled by Ignatius's insistence on making use of human means while at the same time relying solely on the grace of God. Thirdly, the instruction, 'Priests and other clerics . . . shall diligently devote themselves to prayer and exhortation, teaching the crusaders by word and example to have the fear and love of God always before their eyes, so that they say or do nothing that might offend the Divine Majesty', has distinct echoes in the spirituality advocated by Ignatius for both priests and laity. Finally, Ignatius's appreciation of the sacrament of Penance finds support in the words of the decree, 'If they ever fall into sin, let them quickly rise up again through true penitence.' All these elements, and the others mentioned earlier, were of course common to sixteenth-century Roman Catholicism and were not exclusive to Ignatius. Nevertheless they were prominent features of his spirituality and so it may well be that he drew some inspiration regarding them from the crusade decrees.

Admittedly, much of the above involves matters of interpretation, on which readers will form their own judgement. At the least I think it is clear that Ignatius's spirituality must be seen in the context of the medieval crusade tradition; though it should always be remembered that he contributed to a

radical shift in this tradition, moving away from a military expedition to a much more spiritual interpretation of Christ's summons. It is also clear that within the medieval crusade tradition, the crusade decrees of the general councils of the Western Church occupied an important place. Therefore I think these decrees must have had an indirect influence upon Ignatius and quite possibly, in view of the significant similarities that have been remarked upon, a more specific and direct one. Whether more can be claimed must await the further researches of scholars.

Chapter 2

Reception of the First Seven Ecumenical Councils by Medieval and Later General Councils of the Western Church

It has been my privilege to be the general editor of *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, the English edition of the decrees of the 21 ecumenical and general councils from Nicaea I to the second Vatican council in 1962–5.[1] My work as editor has given me some familiarity with the said councils, as you can imagine, both as translator of the decrees of some councils and in overseeing the work on others. So in this communication I wish to share with you the fruits regarding just one question: How were the first seven councils received and made use of by the later councils?

By the first seven councils I mean, of course, the councils of Nicaea I (325), Constantinople I (381), Ephesus (431), Chalcedon (451), Constantinople II (553), Constantinople III (680–1) and Nicaea II (787). By the later general councils are meant those that have traditionally been included in the lists of the western church, principally those of the Roman Catholic church, namely: the ten medieval councils of Lateran I to IV, Lyons I and II, Vienne, Constance, Basel-Florence and Lateran V, and the three councils of the Roman Catholic church after the Reformation divide: Trent (1545–63), Vatican I (1869–70) and Vatican II (1962–5). The fourth council of Constantinople of 869–70 poses a problem since although it features in the western lists and belongs in time and subject-matter with the early councils, it was never recognised as ecumenical by the Eastern Church. For the sake of convenience it therefore seems best to exclude it from consideration – with minimal loss to the arguments of the paper, I believe. The later councils are called here 'general' councils of the Western Church intentionally: more will be said on this point later. I should say, too, that the following remarks are largely confined to the

reception of the first seven councils in the decrees of the later councils, excluding therefore the *acta* and other background aspects of these councils.

As a general statement it would be true to say that on the one hand the first seven councils remained in the background, as a firm pillar you might say, indeed enjoyed a clear priority in the later councils; on the other hand, explicit references to them were relatively rare.

One important expression of the authority accorded to the early councils was the pre-eminence given to the creed of the first council of Constantinople of 381 (the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed). This creed, which was pre-eminent as a symbol of the Christian faith from the council of Chalcedon onwards, retained a favoured place in the later councils, especially from the fifteenth century onwards. Three councils quoted it in full. Florence included it in its decree on the Armenian church.[2] Trent began its doctrinal decrees by quoting it in full, calling it 'principium illud in quo omnes qui fidem Christi profitentur necessario conveniunt, ac fundamentum firmum et unicum contra quod portae inferi numquam praevalebunt'.[3] Similarly, Vatican I placed it at the beginning of its doctrinal statements, though with the less forceful description of 'symbolum fidei quo sancta Romana ecclesia utitur.'[4] (In all three cases the creed included the Filioque clause.) Only in the first case, that of Florence, was the council of Constantinople mentioned by name: in the other two cases the creed was given alone, without reference to its source. Only two other creeds were quoted in full in the later councils, each of them only once: the Athanasian creed, which was included in the council of Florence's decree on the Coptic church, and the somewhat eclectic creed which forms the first decree of the fourth Lateran council of 1215.[5]

The most explicit recognition of the medieval councils' sense of continuity with the early councils came at session 39 of the council of Constance in 1417. At this session, with the election imminent of a new pope (he was to be Martin V) to heal the papal schism which had lasted since 1378, the council promulgated a profession that the incoming pope would be obliged to make. The profession contained the following promise:

> corde et ore confiteor et profiteor . . . me firmiter credere et tenere fidem catholicam, secundum traditiones apostolorum, generalium conciliorum et aliorum sanctorum patrum, maxime autem sacrorum octo conciliorum universalium, videlicet primi Nicaeni, secundi Constantinopolitani, tertii Ephesini, quarti Chalcedonensis, quinti et sexti item Constantinopolitani, septimi item Nicaeni, octavi quoque Constantinopoliani, nec non Lateranensis, Lugdunensis et Viennensis generalium etiam conciliorum.[6]

The profession was repeated at the council of Basel in 1436, with the councils of Constance and Basel being added to the list.[7] These are the only decrees promulgated by the later councils that contained a list of the early councils (though in the course of the council of Florence's decree on the Armenian church almost all of them were mentioned).[8] The distinction, too, made between the early and the medieval councils, with priority being given to the former, is remarkable. Thus, the first eight councils (with Constantinople IV included) are described as universal/ecumenical, whereas the medieval ones are simply general councils.

The distinction between ecumenical and general councils was due partly to the uncertainty of the medieval church about the status of its own councils. That is to say, throughout the medieval period and into the sixteenth century theologians and canonists were hesitant to regard as ecumenical any of the councils that took place during this time, preferring instead the term general council – a hesitancy that seems to have been largely on account of the absence from these councils of representatives of the Eastern Church. It was only in the Counter-Reformation period, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, that the Roman Catholic Church attempted definitively to raise to the status of ecumenical the ten general councils of the medieval period.[9]

The uncertainty about the status of councils after Nicaea II has huge and encouraging implications for the present ecumenical movement, implications that perhaps have not been appreciated sufficiently. That is to say, the decrees of these later councils, the 13 general councils from Lateran I in 1123 to Vatican II, which contain almost all the material disputed between the Roman Catholic church on the one hand, and the Orthodox and Reformed churches on the other, do not enjoy the same authority as those of the first seven councils and to this extent are open to discussion and negotiation. But the point is somewhat by the way as regards this paper. The relevant point is the foundational character and full reception accorded to the first seven councils by the lists of Constance and Basle.

Regarding other specific references to the early councils, they are relatively few. There are various possible reasons for the scarcity. One of them follows from what has just been said about the uncertain status of medieval councils. Whereas the early councils from Chalcedon onwards sought to establish their own ecumenicity by listing the previous ecumenical councils and then claiming that they followed in the line of succession,[10] the hesitancy of the medieval councils regarding their own status may have discouraged them from acting in a similar way. Another point is that whereas there was much continuity in the themes running through the first

seven councils, the concerns of later councils were largely different, so there was less reason to hark back. The medieval councils were concerned principally with discipline and church order, much less with doctrine, and the disciplinary issues confronting them had moved on from those of the early church. The council of Trent was concerned with doctrinal matters in debate in the early church, but for the most part with issues that had been discussed outside of the ecumenical councils. The concerns of Vatican I and II were different again.

A third possible reason for the scarcity of references arises from the essentially papal character of all the later councils, from Lateran I in 1123 to Vatican I in 1869–70, with the exceptions of Constance and Basel-Florence in the fifteenth century and to a lesser extent the council of Trent in the sixteenth century. That is to say, they were summoned and largely controlled by the pope of the time, chiefly in order to secure approval for a programme that had been prepared beforehand by the pope and his curia. It might therefore be thought that the papacy wished to distance itself from the decrees of the more democratic councils of the early church. But this consideration should not be stressed much, in my opinion. There may have been some distancing at the subconscious level; on the other hand the papacy throughout this time wished to show the roots in early tradition of its teachings.

A fourth possible reason concerns the level of awareness of the early councils in, particularly, the medieval church. Was there sufficiently detailed knowledge of them to make frequent references to their decrees in the later councils a realistic possibility? The question perhaps merits further investigation, but a quick look at the *Corpus Iuris Canonici* or an index to the works of Thomas Aquinas, for example, reveals plenty of references to the early decrees, so it seems that the medieval councils could have referred to them if they had wanted to.[11] Finally, there is the question of the form of conciliar decrees, another subject that may deserve further investigation. The decree of a council, even of the medieval and later general councils, received its authority from the council that promulgated it, so that references to earlier councils may have been considered unnecessary or even contrary to form. Still, some references were made and clearly no absolute prohibition existed, so it remains interesting that more were not made.

Not surprisingly, when individual decrees of the early councils were cited, it was usually because a later council had a particular wish to show the early precedents of its legislation. The council of Nicaea of 325, canon 3, was cited by the first Lateran council of 1123, admittedly with a rather forced interpretation, in its seventh decree on the celibacy of the clergy:

> Presbyteris, diaconis vel subdiaconis concubinarum et uxorum contubernia penitus interdicimus et aliarum mulierum cohabitationem, praeter quas synodus Nicaena propter solas necessitudinum causas habitare permisit, videlicet matrem, sororem, amitam vel materteram aut alias huiusmodi, de quibus nulla iuste valeat suspicio oriri.[12]

The same council of Nicaea, canon 6, was cited by the council of Trent in its decree on the reservation of the eucharist: 'Consuetudo asservandi in sacrario sanctam eucharistiam adeo antiqua est, ut eam saeculum etiam Niceni concilii agnoverit'.[13] Two disciplinary decrees of the council of Chalcedon of 451 were quoted: canon 6, concerning the need for a title in order to be ordained, was cited by the council of Trent; and the prohibition against seizing the property of a bishop upon his death, contained in canon 22, was quoted by the second Lateran council of 1139.[14]

In addition, in the council of Florence's decrees on the Armenian and Syriac churches, the definitions of faith of the councils of Chalcedon and Constantinople III were quoted and references were made to the teachings of most other early councils.[15] Florence also mentioned Chalcedon by way of approving Pope Leo's alleged transfer of Ephesus II to Chalcedon, in order to justify Pope Eugenius IV's transfer of the council of Basel to Florence in 1438/9.[16] The teaching of Nicaea II regarding images and the cult of saints was cited by the councils of Trent and Vatican II.[17] Vatican II, in its decree on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, quoted an extract of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed but without naming the council.[18]

The above are, so far as I am aware and the elaborate indices (magnificently compiled by Dr F. Magistretti) of *Decrees* indicate, the only explicit quotations from, or references to, the first seven councils that are to be found in the 13 later general councils. Implicitly, no doubt, the work of the early councils underpinned every aspect of Christian life and thought subsequently, the councils included. It is also true that on a few occasions besides those mentioned above, though not many, the decrees of Vatican II refer to the early councils in their official footnotes. Still, explicit dependence on the early ecumenical councils was severely limited, though other, non-ecumenical councils were cited even less. It is noticeable that the clearest statement came from the councils of Constance and Basle, mentioned above, in the middle of the 'conciliar movement' of the fifteenth century, when the Western Church made its most concerted attempt to regain its conciliar tradition.

Chapter 3

Pastoral Care: The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215

The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 opens a unique window onto pastoral care in the Middle Ages.[1] Summoned by Pope Innocent III and meeting in the Lateran basilica in Rome during the month of November 1215, the assembly of several hundred bishops and other prelates from all over western Christendom enacted in its 71 decrees the most impressive and influential legislation of all medieval councils.

Regarding the preparation for the council, the balance between papal input and that of other contributors is difficult to weigh precisely. Most of the decrees appear to have been drafted by Pope Innocent and the Roman Curia before the beginning of the council, so the task of the latter was largely to rubber-stamp the prepared legislation. More detailed information about possible amendments introduced by individuals is hard to come by, on account of lack of evidence about the council's proceedings. On the other hand, the decrees were not invented out of nothing. Several of them are traceable to decrees of earlier councils, and in the letters sent out in April 1213 to announce the forthcoming council, bishops were invited to suggest topics for the council. In the next two and a half years, moreover, many local councils were held in preparation, at the Pope's express wish, and it seems likely that these local councils had some influence upon the decrees that were drafted for Lateran IV. In short, while the principal impetus for the decrees came from the Pope and the Roman Curia, they certainly reflect a wider constituency within the Church.

The purpose of the council was set forth by Innocent in his letter of summons: 'To eradicate vices and plant virtues, to correct faults and reform morals, to remove heresies and strengthen faith, to settle discords and establish peace, to get rid of oppression and foster liberty, to induce princes

and Christian people to succour the Holy Land.' A broad programme of what we can recognize as pastoral care is intended and this is reflected in the decrees of the council.

The first decree is a creed, entitled 'The Catholic faith'. Coming first, it is a forceful reminder that a correct presentation of Christian doctrine was regarded as the most important pastoral care that could be offered to people. Salvation came through a right understanding and acceptance of God's saving work in Jesus Christ, and salvation surpassed everything else in importance. The creed begins in the plural, 'We firmly believe', not the singular 'I believe', reminding us of the communitarian nature of Christian faith and practice in the Middle Ages: the Church and Christian society formed a community of believers, not just a collection of individuals. The teachings about the Trinity that follow speak about God's plan of salvation for us. Notable, too, is the stress on the goodness of creation. The context here is Catharism, the most prominent heresy of the time, teaching a dualism that portrayed the material world, including our bodies, as intrinsically evil. God is 'the creator of all things invisible and visible, spiritual and corporeal' and 'created human beings composed of both spirit and body in common'. The emphasis is worth noting because the medieval Church is often regarded as negative towards creation and human achievement: on the contrary, it was often defending our worth against those who denied or minimized it. Sin and evil come afterwards, not before: 'The devil and other demons were created by God naturally good but they became evil by their own doing. Men and women sinned at the prompting of the devil.'

The last section of the creed concerns the role of the Church in pastoral care; it is printed at the end of this chapter in the Appendix. Its opening words, 'There is indeed one universal Church of the faithful outside of which nobody at all is saved', emphasize the importance attached to belonging to the Church; though who is a member of the Church is not defined precisely. Teaching about the sacraments, as the normal means of salvation, is also prominent. The Eucharist is spoken of as a 'mystery of unity' in which 'we receive from God what he received from us' and the role of the priest is emphasized in that 'nobody can effect this sacrament except a priest.' Baptism 'brings salvation to both children and adults' and penance – described as 'penitence' rather than explicitly as a sacrament – is available to those who fall subsequently into sin. Finally, marriage is given support with the statement that 'married people find favour with God by right faith and good actions and deserve to attain to eternal blessedness.'

This first decree provides a doctrinal and spiritual justification for pastoral care. The second decree will not detain us since it concerns a rather abstruse

controversy about the Trinity, connected with the writings of Joachim of Fiore. The third decree 'On heretics', however, although it makes hard reading for us today, is essential for understanding the practicalities of pastoral care in the Middle Ages. (Its main sentences are printed in the Appendix.) The most important key to understanding the decree is the idea of a Christian society. Membership of the Church was regarded as vital for salvation, as mentioned above, and being part of a Christian society was normally a corollary of membership of the Church: Christian society was an aspect of the Church. Another key is the sense that the Christian message is self-evidently true, so that anyone who has seen the light and then rejects it must be gravely at fault. That is why the decree says that 'heretics have different faces but their tails are tied together inasmuch as they are alike in their pride.'

We are speaking about a society, Western Christendom, that was largely Christian. There were also Jews and Muslims living within it, but the former, although influential and widely dispersed, were relatively few in numbers and the latter were largely confined to its borderlands, mainly its eastern edge and southern Spain. Christianity dominated as the official religion. The feel is closer to an Islamic country today, far removed from the pluralist society that we almost take for granted as the norm in the West. All this could and did lead to intolerance, which we may rightly deplore, and the decree is a good example of it. On the other hand the decree was trying to protect what was considered important and precious, and we may appreciate this aspect of pastoral care. The protection, moreover, was the responsibility of lay people – the secular authorities mentioned in the decree – as much as the clergy.

The fourth decree, 'On the pride of Greeks towards Latins', is another that grates today. Western crusaders had sacked Constantinople only a decade earlier, in 1204, and yet there is no remorse or apology, only placing the blame for the schism between the two churches on the Greeks. The medieval West had a passionate concern for truth and right living, usually in justification of its own teaching and behaviour. The dark side was intolerance and self-righteousness, but the brighter side was creativity. Much of the inventiveness of the medieval West in religion, as in other areas of life, arose out of this concern for the truth and right living and without it much of the originality would have been lost. A fundamental function of pastoral care was to make creativity – especially creativity in religious affairs – possible and to protect it.

Another undercurrent is the inferiority complex of the West. From the sixteenth century onwards Christianity developed into a world religion, with an accompanying confidence and often arrogance. The Middle Ages precede

that development: Christianity, more particularly Western Christendom, then occupied a small corner of the globe and in many ways was a shrinking religion. Islam and the Tartars threatened its very existence, as the Second Council of Lyons, taking place in 1245, just four years after the city of Budapest (in Hungary) had been captured and sacked by the Tartars, bemoaned in its decree 'On the Tartars': 'When – God forbid! – the world is bereaved of the faithful, faith may turn aside from the world to lament its followers destroyed by the barbarity of this people.'[2] Besides the physical threats, four civilizations were felt in various ways to be superior to Christendom: the classical world of ancient Greece and Rome, with which the medieval West had in many ways never really caught up in terms of material and intellectual achievement; Byzantium, which considered itself to be the true heir of the ancient world much more than its upstart barbarian neighbours in the West; Islam, with its spectacular religious and material successes; and Judaism, a much older religion than Christianity and whose adherents excelled Christians in many walks of life.

The fourth decree of Lateran IV directs attention to the second of these perceived cultural threats, Byzantium. But it provides an opportunity to consider the wider question of the West's defensiveness at this time, which lies just below the surface of various other decrees: hence the above semi-digression. The relevant point is that pastoral care at this time meant care of people and institutions that were perceived to be vulnerable or fragile, the Christian religion and Christian society. Many decrees of the council appear aggressive and uncaring but they should also be seen as the rather clumsy instincts or panic reactions of people who felt threatened, of people who cared for and wished to preserve what was precious to them.

The fifth and sixth decrees, 'The dignity of patriarchs' and 'Provincial councils' are concerned with ecclesiastical organization rather than immediate pastoral care. However, they remind us that the medieval Church was in many respects more democratic and more given to legitimate pluralism, including in its pastoral approach, than at least the Roman Catholic Church is today. Thus the fifth decree renewed 'the ancient privileges of the patriarchal sees' – the pentarchy of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem – and the sixth decree insisted on the regular holding of synods in each diocese and province.

The seventh and eighth decrees, 'Correction of offences' and 'Inquests', introduce us to the importance of law and correction in pastoral care. 'Prelates of Churches', says the former, 'should prudently and diligently attend to the correction of their subjects' offences, especially of clerics, and to the reform of

morals. Otherwise the blood of these persons will be required at their hands.' The latter is a general decree on 'How a prelate ought to inquire into and punish the offences of his subjects'. Canon law was seen as an essential dimension of pastoral care, and many other decrees of the council, as we shall see, were devoted to its implementation.

The ninth decree, 'On different rites within the same faith', reminds us of the legitimate diversity within the Church that has been mentioned already. 'Since in many places peoples of different languages live within the same city or diocese, having one faith but different rites and customs, we order bishops of these cities and dioceses to provide suitable men who will, in the various rites and languages, celebrate the divine services for them, administer the Church's sacraments, and instruct them by word and example.' The decree, on the other hand, in seeking unity and order, says that normally there should be only one bishop for each city or diocese.

The tenth and eleventh decrees, entitled 'Preachers' and 'Schoolmasters', show that proclamation of God's word and communicating an intelligent and intelligible faith to people were central concerns of the Church's pastoral care. 'Among the various things that are conducive to the salvation of the Christian people, the nourishment of God's word is recognized to be specially necessary', begins the former decree and it goes on to instruct bishops 'to appoint suitable men to carry out this duty of sacred preaching, who are powerful in word and deed'. The other decree renewed that of the Third Lateran Council of 1189, which had enacted that 'in each cathedral Church there should be . . . a master to instruct without charge the clerics and other poor scholars'[3] and added that each metropolitan church 'shall have a theologian to teach Scripture to priests and others and especially to instruct them in matters pertaining to the care of souls'. The approach may be too clerical for modern tastes – mostly the clergy instructing the laity – but at least the scriptural and intellectual aspects of Christian faith and pastoral care are taken seriously.

The next two decrees, 'General chapters of monks' and 'Prohibition against new religious orders', show the importance attached to religious orders and their proper ordering and at the same time a suspicion of novelty: the tension between charism and institution, innovation and conservation, in the Church and its pastoral care. The second of the two decrees may appear heavy-handed and negative, but the background is the extraordinary vitality of Christians at the time, in this particular context the foundation of the four orders of friars – Franciscans, Dominicans, Carmelites and Augustinians. Pastoral care was not so much directing people from above, rather keeping some check on and channelling properly their enormous religious energy and creativity.

Decrees 14–19 concern the personal lives of the clergy. The titles of the decrees give a good idea of their contents: 'Punishing clerical incontinence', 'Preventing drunkenness among the clergy', 'Dress of clerics', 'Prelates' feasts and their negligence at divine services', and 'Sentences involving the shedding of blood or a duel are forbidden to clerics'. It is not possible here to enter into the details of the kind of priest or cleric envisaged but the general point is clear, that the behaviour and probity of the clergy were regarded as crucial for pastoral care.

Church buildings, especially parish churches, were the topic of the next two decrees, entitled: 'Profane objects may not be introduced into churches', and 'Keeping chrism and the eucharist under lock and key'. For most people, especially in rural areas, the parish church was the most important large building in the neighbourhood and there were many secular purposes for which it might be used: a warehouse, a market-place, a theatre, a village hall, even a fortress in time of war. The two decrees are concerned to maintain the religious functions of churches, to the exclusion of secular ones, and to preserve decorum inside them. They show the central place that was accorded to the parish church in pastoral care, though as with so many other decrees, the first of them, in prescribing against what were seen as abuses, provides also a glimpse into what may have been the rather different attitudes of the laity.

Decree 21 on annual confession and communion was probably the council's most influential decree of a pastoral nature. (It is printed in the Appendix.) While confession and communion were recommended to people before this time, the obligation 'after they have reached the age of discernment' was created by the decree. There was a loophole regarding communion if 'they think, for a good reason and on the advice of their own priest, that they should abstain from receiving it for a time'; and regarding 'their own priest' in confession, friars were soon given permission to take the place of parish priests, often to the irritation of the latter. Richard Helmslay, a witty English Dominican friar from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, argued from the opening words of the decree, 'All the faithful of both sexes' (*Omnis utriusque sexus*), that it applied only to hermaphrodites but he was roundly condemned![4]

The pastoral intent of the decree is clear and is spelled out well in the instructions given to the priest in confession in the second half of the decree. Nevertheless the decree proved irksome to many people and it was a cause of tension between laity and clergy. The penalties were severe: 'They shall be barred from entering a church during their lifetime and they shall be denied a Christian burial at death.' The decree is a reminder that Lateran IV gives

official or clerical approaches to pastoral care and it would be wrong to assume that everyone else agreed with them.

Decree 22 is also both indicative of official attitudes and suggestive of other approaches 'from below'. Entitled 'That the sick should provide for the soul before the body', it tells doctors and other medics ('physicians of the body'), 'when they are called to the sick, to warn and persuade them first to call in physicians of the soul so that after their spiritual health has been seen to they may respond better to medicine for their bodies; for when the cause ceases so does the effect' – acknowledging the reasoning given earlier in the decree that 'sickness of the body may sometimes be the result of sin'. The paramountcy of the spiritual over the bodily is reinforced in the final sentence: 'Moreover, since the soul is much more precious than the body, we forbid any physician, under pain of anathema, to prescribe anything for the bodily health of a sick person that may endanger his soul.' The supposed dangers to the soul are not spelled out but the use by physicians of astrology, charms, magical potents and such like may have been in mind. Many of the best doctors, moreover, were Jews, and there was suspicion of them in some quarters. Another reason was given later by Boniface Ferrer, former prior-general of the Carthusians and brother of St Vincent Ferrer. He thought that doctors were urging greater and irregular indulgence in sex as a cure for bodily ailments.[5]

The next ten decrees, 23 to 32, are all concerned, in one way or another, with the provision of suitable pastors in the Church. Bishoprics and other benefices must not remain vacant for more than three months after the death or resignation of the previous incumbent (23); elections to benefices must be made freely and be properly confirmed, without undue pressure from kings and other secular lords (24–6); ordinands for the priesthood must be properly trained, and only suitable persons should be promoted to offices in the Church (27, 30–1); parish priests, in return, should be given a proper income (32). An incumbent who agrees to resign his benefice cannot change his mind (28). Nobody may hold more than one benefice involving the cure of souls (29), though at the end of the decree comes an amazing exception: 'As for exalted and lettered persons, however, who should be honoured with greater benefices, it is possible for them to be dispensed by the apostolic see when reason demands it.' The reasons for the importance of priests in pastoral care are given clearly in decree 27, 'On the instruction of ordinands' (which is printed in the Appendix).

Decrees 33 and 34 forbid bishops and other prelates to demand excessive taxes from their subjects. Then follow many decrees on canon law, mostly concerning technical points of the law. They are not immediately relevant to

our concern though they show the value that was given to canon law in pastoral care, as means to an end. On the one hand, there was an obvious danger of the Church becoming too preoccupied with the law, a criticism that was indeed often made at the time. On the other hand, many of the decrees are quite pastoral in their formulation and phrasing, and a number of them are concerned to protect the rights of subjects against those in authority in the Church: rights of the laity against the clergy.

In the middle of these points of canon law are five decrees on the relationship between the two 'swords' of spiritual and temporal authority (42–6). A correct balance between them was regarded as very important for pastoral care in a Christian society. On the one hand, 'we wish clerics not to lay claim to the rights of the laity . . . and not to extend their jurisdiction, under pretext of ecclesiastical freedom, to the prejudice of secular justice.' On the other hand, the clergy were not to allow themselves to become mere puppets of secular lords by taking oaths of fealty to them where this was inappropriate. Lay rulers, moreover, were not to enact laws that were prejudicial to the Church or to impose unjust taxes on it. The underlying principle was Christ's words, 'Render unto Caesar the things of Caesar, and to God the things of God.' The principle is easy to state and yet it is so difficult to know – as medieval people were well aware – where in practice the dividing line lies.

The fundamental goodness of marriage had been stated in the first decree, as mentioned earlier. Decrees 50–2 address three particular issues. In the first, the number of degrees of consanguinity and affinity within which marriage was prohibited was reduced from seven to four. The reasons for the reduction are interesting. The decree admits that human laws can be changed 'when urgent necessity or evident advantage demands it, since God changed in the New Testament some of the commandments of the Old Testament'. It admits implicitly, moreover, that the former rules were not being observed: a reminder in general perhaps that laws should not be taken too seriously and that the whole pastoral framework of Lateran IV, indeed that of the whole medieval Church, 'came about' rather than was simply enacted from above. The number four, for the prohibited degrees in future, was chosen because 'there are four humours in the body, which is composed of the four elements' (earth, air, fire and water), an intriguing line of thought that is not expanded upon.

The second of the three decrees tries to prohibit secret (or 'clandestine') marriages: 'When marriages are to be contracted they shall be publicly announced in the churches by priests, with a suitable time being fixed beforehand within which whoever wishes and is able to may adduce a lawful impediment.' The advantages of knowing clearly who were, and who were

not, married were obvious to both Church and state, even though many people preferred cohabitation or a somewhat ambiguous marital status. The third decree gives procedures for disputed cases about the impediments of consanguinity and affinity.

All three decrees are generally supportive of marriage, an institution that was itself perhaps the most important of all forms of pastoral care – though the decrees do not focus on this aspect – and the indispensable framework for many other forms. Indeed, the second decree ends with the warning, 'Anybody who maliciously proposes an impediment to prevent a legitimate marriage will not escape the Church's vengeance.' And the third ends on a tolerant and pastoral note: 'It is better to leave alone some people who have been united contrary to human decrees than to separate, contrary to the Lord's decrees, persons who have been joined together legitimately.'

Decrees 53–6 and 61 turn to the delicate issue of tithes, the payment of a tenth of a person's income to the Church. Reaching back to the Old Testament, tithes were a reverse of the normal form of pastoral care: financial care for pastors, rather than pastors caring for other people. They could be oppressive and unpopular, but the main aim of the four decrees is to close various loopholes so that the tithes were duly paid and reached the persons for whom they were primarily intended, namely parish priests, and were not siphoned off by monasteries or secular lords.

Saints' relics, alms-collectors and indulgences are the topics of decree 62. The decree is concerned mainly to purge various abuses. Relics are to be displayed in reliquaries and may not be sold. New relics, moreover, require authorization from the papacy before they can be venerated. Alms-collectors, too, must be authorized by the papacy or by the diocesan bishop. They are to be 'modest and discreet and let them not stay in taverns or other unsuitable places or incur useless or excessive expenses, being careful above all not to wear the garb of false religion'. Regarding indulgences, 'because the keys of the Church are brought into contempt, and satisfaction through penances loses its force through indiscriminate and excessive indulgences, which some prelates of churches do not fear to grant, we decree that for the dedication of a basilica the indulgence shall not exceed one year, and forty days for the anniversary of the dedication'. The whole panoply of medieval popular religion is conjured up before us, from Chaucer's pardoner to the preacher of indulgences denounced by Martin Luther, John Tetzel. Lateran IV supported popular devotions but it was well aware of possible abuses.

The abuse of simony is the topic of the next four decrees, 63 to 66. Taking its name from Simon Magus in the Acts of the Apostles, who tried to purchase

with money the power of the Holy Spirit, the abuse meant in the Middle Ages primarily the buying and selling of benefices and ministries in the Church. It was very damaging of pastoral care and difficult to eradicate, inasmuch as it gave the opportunity to unsuitable men to obtain positions in the Church and then to exploit them for financial gain or for the advancement of their families and friends. The dividing line between the simony of demanding payment and the legitimate acceptance of a gift was fine, and the four decrees try to regulate some border areas.

The four decrees on Jews that follow (67–70) are among the most difficult for us to understand today. The titles alone indicate a hostile tone: 'Usury of Jews', 'Jews must be distinguished from Christians in their dress', 'Jews may not hold public offices', 'Converts to the faith among the Jews may not retain their old rite'. Jewish money-lending is called a 'perfidy' by which Christians are 'savagely oppressed'. Jews are ordered to wear distinctive dress and they are forbidden to enter marriages with Christians, which are described as a 'damnable mixing'. They were forbidden to hold public offices since 'it is absurd for a blasphemer of Christ to exercise power over Christians', and Jewish converts to Christianity were to be prevented by a 'salutary and necessary coercion' from returning to Judaism. The decrees were certainly regarded as an important aspect of pastoral care, mainly to protect Christians from Jews, and this has to be faced. The desire for protection resulted partly from the sense of unease and inferiority towards Judaism that has been mentioned. There was too the belief in Christian society, also mentioned above. Still, it is reasonable to see the decrees as a sad deviation and to recognize that pastoral care can go badly wrong when it becomes over-zealous.

The council's last decree, 71, on the crusade to the Holy Land, is also difficult for us to accept today. Yet as the final decree it was intended to be the climax of all the other decrees, the culmination of the reforms initiated by them: a reformed Church in a united Christendom would be able to undertake the crusade to recapture Jerusalem and other parts of the Holy Land that had fallen to Islam. 'It is our ardent desire to liberate the Holy Land from infidel hands', the decree begins, and it goes on to describe the enterprise as 'this work of Jesus Christ'. The crusade, therefore, was regarded as the crowning achievement of successful pastoral care.

All 71 decrees have now been surveyed, warts and all. There is much that we may find distasteful and it is reasonable that we should be critical: we need not be neutral in matters of pastoral care. Nevertheless, it would be a pity if the limitations lead us to ignore the strengths and points of interest in the decrees. The legislation expresses official attitudes – those of the Pope, the Roman Curia

and the bishops of the council – rather than those of the people: though it would be wrong to contrast their outlooks too sharply. The decrees, moreover, were not intended as a systematic treatise on pastoral care in a modern sense: their order is somewhat haphazard and some topics are not treated at all. Still, taken together, they form a remarkably comprehensive programme. Indeed, the concern for reform and better pastoral care is perhaps the most impressive feature of the council. There is, certainly, a passion for the salvation of souls – that we humans reach our final destiny and fulfilment – and the means to this end are given careful attention: spiritual, intellectual and material.

How influential were the decrees? Was the council the motor of developments in the Church in the thirteenth century – often regarded as the golden age of the Western Church in the Middle Ages – or was it merely an onlooker? No doubt the answer lies somewhere in between. What is certain is that in almost all the areas of Christian life in which the century saw spectacular achievements, as well as deviations and disasters, the council issued a decree of some relevance: famous saints such as Francis and Clare of Assisi or King Louis IX of France; the four orders of friars – Franciscans, Dominicans, Carmelites and Augustinians – and the beguine movement for women; the universities, pre-eminently Bologna, Paris and Oxford, and theologians of the stature of Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus; mystical writers such as Mechtild of Magdeburg and Gertrude of Helfta; parish churches, cathedrals and works of art; the Christianity of countless individuals, largely unknown; as well as the Inquisition, crusades, continuing schism with the Eastern Church, the expulsion of Jews. The council did not produce the results single-handed but at least it was a guide, not just a spectator.

Appendix: Texts of the decrees

The catholic faith (last paragraph of decree 1)

There is indeed one universal Church of the faithful, outside of which nobody at all is saved, in which Jesus Christ is both priest and sacrifice. His body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the forms of bread and wine, the bread and wine having been changed in substance, by God's power, into his body and blood, so that in order to achieve this mystery of unity we receive from God what he received from us. Nobody can effect this sacrament except a priest who has been properly ordained according to the Church's keys, which Jesus Christ himself gave to the apostles and their successors. But the sacrament of baptism is consecrated in water at the

invocation of the undivided Trinity – namely Father, Son and Holy Spirit – and brings salvation to both children and adults when it is correctly carried out by anyone in the form laid down by the Church. If someone falls into sin after having received baptism, he or she can always be restored through true penitence. Not only virgins and the continent but also married persons find favour with God by right faith and good actions and deserve to attain to eternal blessedness.

On heretics (extracts from decree 3)

We excommunicate and anathematize every heresy raising itself up against this holy, orthodox and catholic faith which we have expounded above. We condemn all heretics, whatever names they may go under. They have different faces indeed but their tails are tied together inasmuch as they are alike in their pride. Let those condemned be handed over to the secular authorities present, or to their bailiffs, for due punishment. Clerics are first to be degraded from their orders. The goods of the condemned are to be confiscated, if they are lay persons, and if clerics they are to be applied to the churches from which they received their stipends . . . Let secular authorities, whatever offices they may be discharging, be advised and urged and if necessary be compelled by ecclesiastical censure, if they wish to be reputed and held to be faithful, to take publicly an oath for the defence of the faith to the effect that they will seek, in so far as they can, to expel from the lands subject to their jurisdiction all heretics designated by the Church in good faith . . . Catholics who take the cross and gird themselves up for the expulsion of heretics shall enjoy the same indulgence, and be strengthened by the same holy privilege, as is granted to those who go to the aid of the Holy Land. Moreover, we determine to subject to excommunication believers who receive, defend or support heretics.

Annual confession and communion (extracts from decree 21)

All the faithful of both sexes, after they have reached the age of discernment, should individually confess all their sins in a faithful manner to their own priest at least once a year, and let them take care to perform the penance imposed on them. Let them reverently receive the sacrament of the eucharist at least at Easter unless they think, for a good reason and on the advice of their own priest, that they should abstain from receiving it for a time. Otherwise they shall be barred from entering a church during their lifetime and they shall be denied a Christian burial at death.

The priest shall be discerning and prudent, so that like a skilled doctor he may pour wine and oil over the wounds of the injured one. Let him carefully enquire about the circumstances of both the sinner and the sin, so that he may prudently discern what sort of advice he ought to give and what remedy to apply, using various means to heal the sick person. Let him take the utmost care, however, not to betray the sinner at all by word or sign or in any other way. For if anyone presumes to reveal a sin disclosed to him in confession, we decree that he is not only to be deposed from his priestly office but also to be confined to a strict monastery to do perpetual penance.

Instruction of ordinands (decree 27)

To guide souls is the supreme art. We therefore strictly order bishops carefully to prepare those who are to be promoted to the priesthood and to instruct them, either by themselves or through other suitable persons, in the divine services and the sacraments of the Church, so that they may be able to celebrate them correctly. But if they presume henceforth to ordain the ignorant and unformed, which can indeed easily be detected, we decree that both the ordainers and those ordained are to be subject to severe punishment. For it is preferable, especially in the ordination of priests, to have a few good ministers than many bad ones, for 'if one blind man leads another, both will fall into the pit'.

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Chapter 4

The Council of Florence, 1439–45

Florence, Council of (1439–45). For the Western Church this council is important because it both sounded the death knell of the conciliar movement and achieved partial reunions with the Greek (Orthodox) and other Eastern Churches. For Easterners it is largely a mirage concocted by the West and affecting little the sorry story of schism between the churches.

The council came about because Pope Eugenius IV rejected the wishes of the majority of the Council of Basle and ordered its transfer to Italy. Eugenius had been hostile to that council from its beginning, chiefly because it asserted the superiority of a general council over the Pope, and he sought an opportunity to dissolve it or transfer it to a city which would be more under his control. At a vote on 7 May 1437, two-thirds of the members of the council voted for remaining at Basle, one-third voted for the Pope's proposed transfer. Those who voted to remain preserved a council at Basle, and later at Lausanne, until it finally dissolved itself in 1449, but it gradually lost out in the struggle with the rival papal council. Conciliarism never fully recovered in the medieval period.

Eugenius transferred the minority council briefly to Ferrara and then in 1439 to Florence. This council occupied itself partly in issuing condemnations against the continuing council at Basle, partly in negotiations for reunion with the Greek and other Eastern Churches. For the discussions about reunion, the delegation of the Greek Church, coming from Constantinople, was persuaded by Pope Eugenius to come to Ferrara and later to Florence, not to Basle; their choice was a major reason for the demise of the council at Basle.

At Florence, in July 1439, after much discussion, a formula of reunion was agreed upon. The decree, which was promulgated in both Latin and Greek, is usually referred to in the West by the opening words of the Latin version, *Laetentur Caeli*. Agreement was reached on four issues. First, the Greeks

accepted the legitimacy of the addition of the *filioque* clause in the Western creed but they were not obliged to include it in their own creed. Diversity of practice was also accepted in the type of bread used in the Eucharist: leavened bread by the Greek church, unleavened by the Latin. Purgatory, thirdly, was recognized but in the sense of 'cleansing pains' and without mention of fire, which was objectionable to the Greeks. Finally, the latter accepted papal primacy, including plenitude of jurisdiction, but with the saving clause 'as is contained in the acts of ecumenical councils and in the sacred canons'.

The reunion was not a sell-out to the Western Church. Eugenius IV, knowing that reunion would be a major victory in his struggle with the Council of Basle, made considerable concessions, certainly greater than had been made by any of his predecessors as Popes since the start of the schism in the late eleventh century. All the members of the Greek delegation, including its leader, the emperor John VIII Palaeologus, signed the decree of reunion, except the metropolitan of Ephesus, Mark Eugenicus. The patriarch of Constantinople, Joseph II, who had been present at the negotiations, died shortly before the signing. Nevertheless the reunion was not received within the Greek church. Several members of their delegation, in addition to Mark Eugenicus, voiced reservations on the sea voyage back to Constantinople, and the emperor John VIII never formally promulgated the decree of reunion within the Byzantine empire. The whole project was overtaken by the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453.

The reunion, therefore, has been of historical interest rather than of lasting theological significance. In the renewal of discussions about reunion in recent years, attention has focused more on the possibility of returning to relations between the two churches before the original split in the eleventh century. Still, the decree of Florence has formed part of the background of recent discussions and it may have potential for the future, especially since it illustrates the willingness of the papacy to compromise.

The rejection of the reunion by the Eastern Church was not immediately apparent in the West, so that *Laetentur Caeli* appeared to be a triumph for the papacy. Thereafter the council, which moved to Rome in 1443 for the final two years of its existence, occupied itself in further condemnations of the Council of Basle and in reunions with four other churches: the Armenians, Copts, Chaldaeans, and Maronites of Cyprus. In each case only a small group within the church entered into communion with Rome and the reunion meant, for the most part, a submission to Roman claims rather than a negotiated settlement. The decrees of reunion with the Armenians and Copts were very detailed and they exercised considerable influence upon Roman

Catholic theology in later centuries, defining the seven sacraments and asserting the impossibility of salvation outside the church.

Another aspect of the council, which influenced the European Renaissance, was the arrival of Greek scholars from Byzantium. Most prominent among them was John Bessarion, who as archbishop of Nicaea attended the council as part of the delegation from Constantinople. He accepted the reunion, was created a cardinal by Pope Eugenius and made his home in Italy, where he acted as a patron to other Greek scholars.

The council came to be included in the Roman Catholic Church's traditional list of ecumenical councils. But its ecumenicity, and therefore its authority, may be questioned on the grounds of both its rejection by the Greek church and the abstention of the Council of Basle from its proceedings.

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Chapter 5

The Council of Trent, 1545–63

Trent dominated Roman Catholic theology for four centuries. Although Martin Luther had appealed to a general council of the church to resolve the issues brought forward by him, the papacy long remained unwilling to follow this course. Fear of a revival of conciliar claims to superiority over the papacy, as propounded by the previous councils of Constance and Basle, as well as disagreement about the place, were major causes of the delay. By the time the council was called, as a result, the divisions between Protestants and Roman Catholics had hardened. Trent was eventually chosen as a place acceptable to both pope and emperor: to the former as lying in Italy and therefore not too far from his control, to the latter because it was an imperial fief and therefore subject to the emperor's authority. Most of the sessions were held in the cathedral. The council met in the three periods of 1545–7, 1551–2 and 1562–3. In the intervals its continuation was often in doubt. The start, moreover, was far from promising with only 30 or so bishops and others, mostly Italians, attending. Gradually the council gathered momentum and over 200 members attended the later sessions.

By the third session (February 1546), the council was defining its aims as 'the rooting out of heresy and the reform of conduct'. This twofold purpose dominated the remainder of the council. The heresy in mind, though it was rarely mentioned by name, was the Protestant Reformation which, in various forms, had been sweeping across Europe with remarkable success in the preceding decades. Even so, the council, especially in its early stages, was no mere head-on confrontation with Protestantism. There was a party within the council, headed by cardinals Marcello Cervini and Reginald Pole and the head of the Augustinian friars, Girolamo Seripando, who wanted the better elements of the Reformation to be taken on board, and their views were partly represented in the council's decrees. The council, somewhat belatedly, issued three official invitations to Protestants to attend, in 1551, 1552 and 1562.

Trent placed itself in the mainstream of the Christian tradition by affirming the Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed in its first doctrinal decree. On authority, the next issue to be tackled, the council expressed reverence for 'all the books of the Old and New Testaments', but also affirmed the role of tradition in the church. This stance can be interpreted as a 'two-source' theory of authority, yet scripture and tradition were said to find their one source in the gospel proclaimed by Jesus Christ: a knitting together that was developed further in chapters 2 and 3 of Vatican II's decree on revelation. On justification, another central issue in the Reformation controversies, a long and subtle decree went far in accepting the Protestant position, emphasizing 'the powerlessness of nature and law to justify' and the gratuity of God's saving grace, but also stressed our role in 'giving free assent to and co-operating with this same grace' and the possibility of further growth in sanctification through 'faith united to good works'.

The rest of the council's doctrinal decrees were mostly taken up with the sacraments. Detailed expositions affirmed the medieval number of seven – baptism, Eucharist, confirmation, penance, marriage, orders and last anointing – against the usual Protestant number of two, baptism and Eucharist. The Eucharist was treated particularly closely and here a rather hardline approach was adopted, with strong emphasis on the doctrine of transubstantiation. Other doctrinal topics in debate with Protestants received decrees, mostly towards the end of the council: purgatory, the intercession of saints, indulgences.

On the 'reform of conduct', the second main thrust, the council's work was extensive but less complete than in the area of doctrine. Instruction and preaching; the suitability and responsibilities of persons appointed to benefices, including the abuses of pluralism and non-residence; religious orders of men and women; various devotional practices, including devotions to saints and fasting: these were all treated at some length, though in some cases with too much allowance for papal and other dispensations, and too much concern for vested interests, to satisfy the wishes of more thoroughgoing Catholic reformers. An important decree authorized the establishment of seminaries for the training of future priests, preferably one for each diocese.

In its final session, the council entrusted to the Pope the task of producing a catechism, revised versions of the breviary and missal, and a list of books that Catholics were forbidden to read. These provisions led to the 'catechism of Trent', the Roman breviary, the Tridentine mass, and *Index librorum prohibitorum.*

Trent was a cornerstone of the Counter-Reformation and gave Catholic apologists something sensible to say on almost every topic in the Reformation debate. Its range and success was a principal reason why the next general

council of the Roman church, Vatican I, did not take place for more than three centuries: there seemed to be no need for another. Arguably it deepened and prolonged the Reformation divisions, but such a view probably does less than justice to the subtlety and sophistication of many of its decrees. The council made points that needed to be stated and it may be seen as the best that could be done, by the Roman Catholic Church, in the circumstances. In this sense it preserved important points in the Christian tradition and may benefit reunion in the end.

Trent's dominance waned in the 1950s and came to an end at Vatican II. The Roman Catholic Church, however, still struggles with its legacy both internally and in its relations with other churches. Perhaps the best way forward is to value its remarkable achievements without exaggerating its authority: to see it as a general council of the Roman Catholic Church – along with other councils after the East-West schism of the eleventh century – rather than an ecumenical council binding on all Christians: a more relaxed attitude that surprisingly few theologians have adopted.

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Chapter 6

The Reformation and Regionalism: Further Reflections on the Church in Late Medieval Norwich

The starting point of this paper is my recent book on religion in late medieval Norwich.[1] In this work I tried to describe and analyse religion in Norwich, the provincial capital of East Anglia and one of the half-dozen most important cities in England, during the late medieval period. This morning I am not going to provide any additional information. I have not done any further substantial research on the topic. What I would like to do is to stand back a little and to make a few reflections on Norwich in the wider context of the late medieval English Church and of Western Christendom in general. The two topics on which I should like to say a few words, using Norwich as a case-study, are these: first, the late medieval Church and the Reformation; secondly, and much more briefly, regionalism in the late medieval Church.

First, then, the late medieval Church and the Reformation. How did the late medieval Church prepare the way for the Reformation? What were the causal connections between the two? I must admit to a certain reluctance here since it has always seemed to me important to look at the late medieval Church in itself, without constantly thinking about the Reformation which followed. A nervous pre-occupation with the Reformation, as if everything inevitably led to this, can distort our vision of the late medieval Church. Nevertheless the question remains an important one to ask from time to time, and so, hesitatingly and aware of the dangers, I shall attempt it. Norwich, moreover, is an especially interesting case-study because the contrast between the pre- and post-Reformation periods is apparently so sharp: seemingly a strong and healthy Church in the late Middle Ages, and yet a Puritan

stronghold by the reign of Elizabeth and into the seventeenth century.[2] How did this change come about?

Well, I think that when considering the causal connections between the late medieval Church and the Reformation, it is essential to be aware of the various models of what was happening at the time of the Reformation which lurk at the back of our minds, because the model of the Reformation that we use, consciously or subconsciously, will strongly influence the way we see any causal connections between it and the late medieval Church. I think there have been five principal models as to what was happening at the time of the Reformation, and I would like to outline them briefly before applying them to our case-study of Norwich. So please excuse me if the next bit of this paper is condescendingly obvious to most of you.

First, the model of the Reformation as a natural reaction against the late medieval Church. That is to say, the Reformation as a reaction against a late medieval Church that was in such a decadent state that its collapse was more or less inevitable – an over-ripe apple that was bound to fall. This is the traditional interpretation of the Reformation. It survived so long as the Reformation was studied largely from a confessional standpoint, so long as, in other words, the overwhelming majority of Reformation historians were Christians, whether Protestant or Catholic, and who therefore wished to justify their churches, and therefore partly to justify their own beliefs, and often no doubt to justify themselves, in terms of what happened in the sixteenth century. For this model of reaction was one that suited both Protestants and, somewhat paradoxically but at least to some extent, Roman Catholics. The only difference between the two parties was about whether the reaction was justified. Thus, Protestant historians argued that the Reformation was a justifiable reaction because of the decadent state of the late medieval Church. Roman Catholic historians, to oversimplify, agreed that the Reformation was a reaction against the late medieval Church, but argued that while the late medieval Church left much to be desired from a moral and disciplinary point of view – in terms of behaviour, practices and so on – nevertheless in doctrine the late medieval Church had not gone astray; and therefore the reaction initiated by the Reformation was understandable because of the moral laxity and so on, but was not justifiable from a doctrinal point of view. Roman Catholic historians didn't want to admit the need for changes or developments in doctrine, especially those which came from Luther and others outside the Roman Church. I think we can say that this was the prevalent interpretation of the Reformation down to the middle of the nineteenth century: that is, so long as the overwhelming majority of historians of the Reformation were themselves either Protestants or Catholics.

It is with the emergence, in the middle of the nineteenth century, of historians who were not themselves of any particular Christian persuasion that we see the emergence of a second model of the Reformation, a model of non-religious causes. To oversimplify, the Reformation was seen as not primarily a religious phenomenon at all, but as merely the result of other more basic underlying causes, be they economic or social or whatever. The religious changes of the Reformation were merely symptoms or results of these underlying economic or social forces, as it were like sparks flying off a catherine-wheel. Marx and Weber were surely the decisive influences here.

The third model is not easy to define but is perhaps best called socio-religious. In many respects it is the most recent interpretation. It is proposed by historians who want to preserve the best insights of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century economic and social historians, but who also wish to assert the fundamentally religious nature of the Reformation. Many of them have been influenced by the French *Annales* school; in some ways it is an application of *Annales* method to ecclesiastical history. Jean Delumeau is perhaps the best representative; Francis Rapp has applied it to the late medieval period; John Bossy is the best English representative.[3] These historians may differ as to their conclusions. But I think that at the heart of their interpretation, perhaps its most characteristic feature, is the distinction between what might be called content and form in religious change: the distinction between surface phenomena and the deeper movements underlying them. They would argue, for example, that in the midst of all the apparent changes of the Reformation there were certain underlying continuities, such as the continuous trend towards a more personal and committed religion: and that there were basic similarities between the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, despite their apparent contrariness.

Finally, the fourth and fifth models, which in many ways go together. The fourth is of importation from outside. According to this model, the explanation of the Reformation in a particular locality is not to be sought primarily in the internal events of the locality but in what happened outside it – in England, for example, in the imposition of central government policies as well as in the influence of Luther, Calvin and other Continental figures. All historians would surely ascribe some importance to this model. However, there has been renewed emphasis upon its importance, particularly I think among historians who are unhappy with the first three models. Professor Scarisbrick, with his emphasis on the role of the English central government, is perhaps the best example;[4] Dr Whiting, in an article on iconoclasm, is another exponent.[5] This model often goes alongside the fifth and last one, that

of the unpredictable decisions of a few great men. According to this model, the Reformation was not inevitable or determined in its outcome nor dependent upon impersonal forces, but resulted from the unpredictable decisions of a relatively few persons who happened to be in positions of crucial importance. If Martin Luther had decided to stay within the Roman Church, or if Henry VIII had not fallen in love with Anne Boleyn, or Catherine of Aragon had borne him a son who lived, then things might have been very different, and so on. All except extreme determinists would ascribe some weight to this model. In its extreme form it may be outdated and associated with rather discredited historians, such as Hilaire Belloc. But it, like the fourth model, is receiving renewed emphasis as historians find themselves increasingly unhappy with the first three models.

These, then, are what seem to me the five principal models that historians use when they speak about the late medieval Church as a cause of the Reformation. I would like now to return to Norwich and use it as a testcase. Taking each of the models in turn, I shall try to show how far Norwich did or did not support each of them. In this way I shall hope to make a small contribution to understanding how the late medieval Church shaped the Reformation.

The first model – that of the Reformation as a reaction against the late medieval Church – is the traditional and until recently the most widely accepted answer. Yet it is the model that the evidence from Norwich goes most against. The evidence from Norwich suggests a remarkably high level of support for Christianity in the city. Certainly nothing suggests a thoroughly decadent local Church, leading to the Reformation as an inevitable reaction against this unsatisfactory state. Let me give some of the more striking evidence of this support for the local Church. There is the sheer number of religious institutions and activities. Some of them were normal for a major English city, but many of them were on an exceptionally large scale. Remember, too, that all this was for a population of around 10,000.[6] Some 50 parish churches, almost all of them extensively rebuilt on a larger and grander scale between 1350 and 1530, most of them were well equipped with the books and liturgical items needed for church services, according to the inventory of church goods drawn up by the archdeacon of Norwich in 1368; and they had an average of almost two priests attached to each church, according to the visitation records of 1492; certainly they were very adequate for the religious needs of an average congregation of some 200 persons, or 50 families.[7] In addition, there was a cathedral with a large Benedictine priory attached, four large friaries and three colleges of secular priests[8] (though only one nunnery[9]); Norwich contained the largest number of hermits and anchorites known to

have lived in any English city after 1370, including London, namely 40 or so;[10] and the only known communities in England closely resembling Continental beguinages, two or three of them flourishing in the mid-fifteenth century;[11] there were also almost 100 craft guilds, and some 45 pious confraternities, mostly attached to parish churches or religious houses.[12]

There is also the evidence of popular support for these institutions and activities. This argues against the local Church being merely an empty shell, so to speak, without grass-roots backing. This support is of course not easy to measure. Some of it, however, is proved by the institutions and activities themselves: namely, those that were initiated and organised by the laity and so cannot be regarded as being imposed by the clergy against the laity's wishes. Such were craft guilds and pious confraternitics; most of the hermits, anchorites and communities resembling beguinages; and many of the parish activities. Wills are also evidence here. I realise that the writing of wills was governed to some extent by conventions – by the scribes who drew them up and no doubt suggested bequests to the testators – but I don't think this should be exaggerated. After all, wills represent the highly personalised wishes of people at a solemn moment in their lives, and therefore they should he taken seriously. Moreover, the wide variety of bequests show that the testators did exercise considerable freedom of choice. The figures for Norwich are impressive, perhaps especially with regard to institutions and activities later attacked by the Reformers. The wills of 1,804 citizens written between 1370 and 1532 survive, and the following figures are based on a sample of 904 of them.[13] Over 90 per cent of them left bequests for parish churches.[14] Nearly two-thirds left specific bequests for masses and prayers for the dead, principally for their own souls; this was additional to the request for a (Christian) burial which was contained in almost every will, and additional to the more general requests for prayers contained in the residuary clauses; moreover the money left was often far too large to be merely conventional gestures, with a third giving at least £5 for masses and prayers, which was roughly the average annual wage of a building labourer in southern England at that time.[15] Half of them gave to one or more of the four friaries, most of these giving to all four.[16] The number giving to votive lights (mostly of saints) rose steadily throughout the fifteenth and early sixteenth century, reaching 48 per cent of the laity in the period 1518–32.[17]

Further evidence, against the view that the late medieval period inevitably culminated in the reaction of the Reformation, is provided by the resolution of several disputes between the citizens and various ecclesiastical bodies. Much the most serious was the dispute between the city government and the

Benedictine cathedral priory. This complicated and long-standing dispute centred around the extensive privileges which the priory had acquired within the city and its suburbs at the time of, and shortly after, its foundation in the late eleventh century. Matters had come to a head in 1272, when the citizens had sacked and partly burned the priory and cathedral and had killed some 13 tenants or employees of the priory. The dispute simmered throughout the rest of the medieval period, coming to a head again in 1453 with 'Gladman's Insurrection', when the priory was again attacked, though this time nobody was killed. However, the dispute eased thereafter and was resolved largely in the city's favour by two royal charters of 1524 and 1525, which went in favour of the citizens on most points at issue.[18] The period after 1450 also saw the resolution in the city's favour of disputes with other religious houses, namely the abbeys of Wendling and St Benet of Hulme and the nunnery of Carrow.[19] In this sense the Henrician dissolution of monasteries was unnecessary from the point of view of the citizens of Norwich, not the inevitable culmination of conflicts. Moreover, with the exception of the dispute between the citizens and the cathedral priory, there is little evidence of anti-clericalism in the city.[20]

Indeed, positive evidence of support for the city's clergy is shown not only by the testamentary evidence shown above, but also by some interesting evidence about the number of sons of Norwich citizens who became priests or members of religious orders. We get some information about this from the episcopal registers when they mention the home towns of ordinands. They show that between 1413 and 1445, when the home towns were recorded regularly, almost three times as many ordinands for the secular priesthood were coming from Norwich as from the next most productive town, Lynn, and more than eight times as many as from any other town in the diocese.[21] The wills of Norwich citizens also provide interesting information about this. Of the sons mentioned in these wills (1,804 wills altogether), between 10 per cent and 11 per cent were mentioned as being priests or members of religious orders. This is a remarkably high figure, yet it must still be a considerable understatement since it does not include those sons who became priests or members of religious orders after their parents made their wills. The testators came predominantly from the upper ranks of urban society. The figures are therefore important in showing that the older and more institutional forms of religious life still had considerable appeal for a class of young men who might be expected to have been more than usually anti-clerical.[22] The proportion of daughters who were mentioned in the wills as being nuns was much lower, at only 2 per cent,[23]

reflecting the far smaller number of nuns than priests and male religious in medieval Christendom in general.

Finally, there is the apparent absence of Lollardy in Norwich. There is no evidence of early Lollardy in the city and none of its citizens is known to have taken part in Oldcastle's rising in 1414. There were only a handful of known cases of Lollardy in the city before 1510. The clearest evidence that the absence was real, not just apparent, resulting from lack of evidence, comes from the records of the trials of Lollards from Norwich diocese conducted by Bishop Alnwick between 1428 and 1431. The trials formed one of the largest drives against heresy ever undertaken in medieval England. They revealed that Lollardy was widespread in parts of East Anglia, with several centres of some importance. This makes its lack of impact in the city of Norwich all the more remarkable. Moreover, the city might he expected to have yielded an unusually large number of suspects since it was the site of most of the trials, and the bishop might he expected to have been especially vigilant in his own city. Yet only two of the approximately 50 men and women from the diocese who were convicted at the trials were from the city of Norwich, and there were only a few other indications that heresy had any influence in the city. This is, I think, one further indication that the religion provided by the local church was sufficiently rich and varied as to cater for the religious tastes of most citizens. There was no need to resort to Lollardy. No apparent need, too, to turn to the Reformation.[24]

You may begin to ask whether there was any evidence that Norwich was ripe for the Reformation. There were a few indications. There was a decline in testamentary bequests for masses and prayers for the dead in the 1520s;[25] the number of monks at the cathedral priory dropped gradually alter 1460, and sharply in the early 1530s;[26] there was the case of Thomas Bilney, who was finally executed for heresy just outside the city gates in 1531; and there are some other indications of the growth of Lollardy in the city in the 1520s.[27] But these were for the most part very late developments, after Luther's appearance on the public scene. Moreover they represent, I think, a creeping insecurity about the value and future of the old religion, which was beginning to create a vacuum in the religious life of the city, rather than a vigorous reaction to the old ways. There is also some evidence from visitation records of immorality among the clergy, absenteeism from church on Sundays and feast-days, and abstention from the sacraments of the Eucharist and penance at the prescribed times.[28] This evidence cannot be dismissed as trivial. Nevertheless it seems well short of widespread dissent or a general collapse of standards. If we take the period 1450 to about 1520, with the resolution of the city's disputes with the cathedral priory and other religious houses,[29] with

an ever increasing number of testamentary bequests of a religious nature[30] and with the continuing vitality of both the older religious institutions and newer lay movements,[31] the church in Norwich appears in remarkably healthy shape on the eve of the Reformation. Few citizens would, I think, have considered the radical changes to come either imminent or necessary.

What then of the second model – that the causes of the Reformation were essentially non-religious? Obviously I cannot enter this debate at all fully here since it involves, as you will be well aware, such basic presuppositions about the nature of historical causality, which would take far too long to discuss in this short paper. I would just like to make two brief remarks. First, there is the seriousness with which religion appears to have been taken by the citizens of late medieval Norwich. The sheer number and intensity of the religious institutions and activities mentioned above, all for a population of only about 10,000, is strong proof that religion was taken seriously in the city. It would be hard to reduce religion to other factors, be they economic or social or whatever. But secondly, and on the other hand, there does appear an element of conformity in the citizens' religion. This is not easy to define. One suspects it from the ease with which the citizens accepted the changes of the Reformation, but there are also hints of it in the late medieval period. One has the impression of the majority of citizens following religious fashions. There is great support for the religious institutions and activities that come into being, but most of the citizens are supporters rather than initiators. In a sense there is a relative lack of personal commitment. The apparent weakness of Lollardy, or the paucity of citizens taking up religious standpoints which went against majority opinions, are perhaps expressions of this. Still, I wouldn't want to exaggerate this point and I am not sure where it leads to. I don't think it argues for superficiality in religion, nor that religion in the city can be reduced to non-religious factors. On the whole I think it argues that religion was communitarian rather than individualistic.

I should like now to turn to the third model, that of socio-religious causes, and to examine it in more detail. As I mentioned earlier, at the heart of this explanation lies the distinction between surface phenomena and underlying movements, between what might be called content and form in religion. In discussing the first model, that of the Reformation as a reaction against the late medieval Church, we saw the remarkable change of content in the city's religion before and after the Reformation. This change was apparently unprepared for. But can it be explained by a more underlying continuity? Yes, partly, I think, in at least three areas: religious education, religious development, and religiosity itself.

First, religious education. There is no doubt about the dramatic changes in the content of the citizens' religious knowledge before and after the Reformation. Doubtless the citizens of Norwich of around 1450, apparently devoted to a 'High Church', almost 'Baroque' religion, would have been amazed by the Puritan attitudes of so many of their fellow citizens of a century and a half later. But there is evidence of a continuing growth of religious education itself during those 150 years, and this is I think equally significant as the change in content, because if we understand education correctly we will expect it to lead to change. Our error is to think of religious education in purely static terms, namely, that improved religious education simply leads to the better expression and defence of old truths. But this is at least partly wrong. Religious education, like all education, is dynamic and involves growth, leading to deeper understanding which in turn naturally involves change and development. So we should expect some change with education, not just reinforcement of the status quo.

Certainly the evidence of a continuing rise in the level of religious education in Norwich during the fifteenth and early sixteenth century, or at least of a continuously high level, is impressive. It is most quantifiable for the clergy, especially the secular clergy with benefices (thanks to the surviving records of their appointments in the episcopal registers). Thus the number of the city's beneficed parish clergy who were university graduates rose from 8 per cent (12 out of 158) between 1370 and 1449, to 32 per cent (23 out of 71) between 1450 and 1499, and to 42 per cent (25 out of 60) between 1500 and 1532. Similarly with the beneficed clergy at the three colleges of secular priests in the city: 40 per cent (17 out of 42) were university graduates between 1370 and 1449, 81 per cent (38 out of 47) between 1450 and 1532.[32] For the religious orders, besides the university education which many received, there were schools for young monks and friars at the Benedictine cathedral priory and at each of the four friaries. Indeed, the school at the Franciscan friary attracted friars from abroad, including Peter de Candia, the future Pope Alexander V. The cathedral priory contained one of the finest libraries in the country, numbering at least 1,350 books at the priory's dissolution in 1539: Bale and Leland, writing in the sixteenth century, showed that there were smaller libraries at the friaries. Moreover, of the 'famous writers' listed in Bale's *Scriptorum illustrium maioris Brytannie catalogus*, the remarkably high number of 28 were members of these five religious houses.[33]

The education of the laity is more difficult to quantify. Hopefully they benefited from the apparently high standard of clerical education. They also

showed an interest in education through scholarships. Thus between 1370 and 1532, 58 of their surviving wills, all made in fact after 1450, contained bequests for young men, almost invariably priests or candidates for the priesthood, to study, usually at a university.[34] An alderman called Philip Curson, for example, stated in his will of 1502 that he would pay for his son, if he 'will be a priest', to 'be found to Cambridge schools to learn that faculty that his mind is most disposed on, till he is bachelor in the law or of art'; and Robert Elys wanted his wife to 'keep little Reynold to the school, if he will abide with her, to the time she knows whether he will be a man of the Church or not'.[35] There is also some evidence from the books left by both clergy and laity in their wills.[36] Unfortunately time does not permit a proper treatment of this here. Let me just take the case of Margaret Purdans, a widow who made her will in 1481. She bequeathed the following books: an 'English psalter' and a 'small psalter'; 'Le Doctrine of the Herte', which was presumably a translation of 'De Doctrina Cordis', the treatise addressed to a woman on how to lead a devout life which was usually ascribed to Bishop Grosseteste of Lincoln; an 'English book of Saint Bridget'; and 'a book called Hylton', which was presumably a work by Walter Hilton, the fourteenth-century English mystic.[37] Her books seem to place her squarely in the line of devout and literate lay persons to which Dr Pantin drew attention.[38] The most famous case of all is of course Julian of Norwich, the anchoress and author of *Revelations of Divine Love*, if Walsh and Colledge are right about the high standard of her education.[39]

A second line of continuity is that of religious development. What I mean is this. It is usually assumed that the late medieval period was one of decline in religion, paralleling and accompanying the demographic, economic, social and political crises of the period. The thirteenth century is seen as the high point of the Middle Ages, and the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as a period of decline from this. The model of the Reformation as a natural reaction against the late medieval Church is also influential. For if the reaction of the Reformation was justifiable, it must have been against a decadent church – a church that provoked a reaction. Or, on the wider scene, if the sixteenth century is to be seen as a century of light – the discovery of the New World, the Renaissance and the Reformation – then the earlier period must have been dark in contrast. The fault arises from looking at the late medieval period from the standpoint of either the thirteenth century or the sixteenth century, not in its own right. But since historians of the high Middle Ages and of the sixteenth century are more numerous than those of the late Middle Ages, so they are allowed to get their way! In fact the evidence from Norwich suggests the opposite, namely that the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were

a period of growth and development in religion, not of decline. Thus the period saw the continuing vitality in the city of the older religious institutions which had grown up in the early and high Middle Ages: the parishes, the secular clergy and religious orders. And it also saw the growth and development of newer religious movements, which were specially characteristic of the late Middle Ages and more centred on the laity: anchorites, hermits and communities resembling beguinages; craft guilds and pious confraternities; chantries; the proliferation of devotions to the saints. There was an apparently harmonious development of both the old and the new – development in the best sense. I have described this in more detail in my book.[40] My point is simply this: the period 1300 to 1530 as well as the Reformation period were times of development for religion in Norwich; the fact that there continued to be religious development is at least as significant as the content of this development, so that there was a certain underlying continuity even though the content of people's beliefs and attitudes changed markedly before and after the Reformation; after all, one should expect development to lead to change, since development of its very nature involves an element of change.

The third line of continuity – at least of connection – between the late Middle Ages and the Reformation is that of religiosity, the level of religious awareness and practice. My point here is similar to what I have said before, and in a sense sums it up. I have argued that there seems to have been an unusually high level of religious awareness and practice in late medieval Norwich, that Norwich was an unusually religious city; and all the evidence suggests that this continued to be the case, namely that Norwich continued to be an unusually religious city, until at least the early seventeenth century. I think that this high level of religiosity, as it might be called, is just as significant as the ways – the practices and beliefs – in which it expressed itself; and that one has a continuity here despite all the surface changes. Indeed one should expect change from religious awareness since religion is something dynamic and moving, not something static; a journeying on, not just a confirmation in old attitudes and prejudices. Well, you may say this is a theological question and not really the concern of history. But I think the question – whether religion is changing or static – cannot be avoided by anyone who wishes to understand the connection between the late medieval Church and the Reformation. Because if you see religion as essentially static, you will see only disconnection at the Reformation, which is very hard to explain, at least in Norwich; but if you see religion as intrinsically involving development, you will be less surprised by the Reformation.

To conclude this third, socio-religious model of the Reformation. It has its strengths. It helps us to distinguish between various layers in religious change, and to see beyond or under external changes. Nevertheless it has its limitations. In particular, it would be wrong to draw the distinction between external phenomena and underlying movements too sharply. External beliefs and practices cannot be divorced from underlying attitudes; they are expressions of these attitudes. And while religion of its very nature may lead to change, this does not mean arbitrary change or change in any direction whatever. So while this model helps us to see elements of continuity in Norwich's religion before and after the Reformation, and indeed makes us expect change precisely because of the high levels of religious education, religious development and religiosity in the city, it nevertheless does not explain the actual changes that took place. Maybe the situation in late medieval Norwich leads us to expect some kind of change, but the actual changes that took place remain perplexing.

Finally, the fourth and fifth models – those of importation from outside and of the chance decisions of a few individuals – I shall only discuss these briefly. To some extent they, like the second model of non-religious causes, involve basic principles of historical causality, which cannot be adequately treated in this short paper. Moreover the correctness or not of the two models depends on events and actions that took place after the beginning of the Reformation, which is not the direct concern of this paper. I must content myself with making a few remarks about whether the late medieval period, in Norwich, does or does not support the two models as likely. I think it is important to remember that as I said earlier, these two models are proposed to a considerable extent out of frustration with the other three. Thus, historians are increasingly aware of a large measure of popular support for the religion offered by the late medieval Church, and this makes the model of reaction for the Reformation difficult to sustain; and many historians dislike what they see as the attempt to reduce the Reformation to non-religious or socio-religious causes. They are therefore attracted to the fourth and fifth models as possible explanations. Certainly the evidence from Norwich gives them considerable support for rejecting the model of the Reformation as a reaction against the late medieval Church, inasmuch as it provides impressive evidence of the citizens' support for their local church and the religion offered. On the other hand the evidence from Norwich, in giving some support to the third model of socio-religious causes, makes it less imperative to resort to the fourth and fifth models: we have at least some elements of an internal explanation. However, this third model, as I have argued, does not explain the actual

changes that took place: it might lead us to expect change, but it does not explain the particular changes that took place. These latter remain perplexing if one looks at Norwich alone, so that the decisions of outsiders are a likely partial answer. This view is given some support by what I have described as the element of conformity in the citizens' religion: a willingness to be led by others.[41] Thus the Reformation in the city appears both as the result of a religious vacuum there and as a snowball which, once it begins to roll, follows its own unpredictable path down the slope, out of its own control, and therefore very subject to the pushes of outsiders. I should like finally to mention two very clear outside influences, the one well known and in the Reformation period, the other less well known and spanning both sides of the Reformation divide. The first is 'The Strangers' as they came to be called; some four thousand Protestant immigrants from the Low Countries who settled in Norwich in the reign of Elizabeth. They must surely be a major factor in explaining the Protestantism of Norwich. The second influence is less well known but perhaps no less important, namely the influence of Cambridge University. Dr Morgan demonstrated the university's influence on Norwich mainly for the Reformation period, but he also showed that it existed earlier;[42] my researches support his findings for the late medieval period.[43]

There is one final point that I would like to make by way of conclusion to this first section on the late medieval Church and the Reformation. It will be obvious from what I have said that Norwich emphasises the complexity of the causal connections between the late medieval and the Reformation periods. This complexity is generally accepted by most historians today. But Norwich also emphasises the complexity of the late medieval Church itself. What I mean is this. Historians used to think of the late medieval Church and the Reformation as two neatly packaged parcels. There was debate about the causal connections between them, but there was not doubt about their nature; they were two clearly defined things. In recent decades historians have seen that the Reformation was a far more complex phenomenon than had earlier been realised. They have unwrapped the Reformation parcel, so to speak, and sorted out at least some of its component parts. But the late medieval Church also must he unpacked, and this process has been much slower. Indeed, this is for me a basic unease with most Reformation historians, that they tend to assume that the late medieval Church was a kind of monolithic whole. Of course they disagree about whether the late medieval Church was for or against the Reformation (for want of a better way of expressing it) – that is the point of their disagreement – but nevertheless most of them tend to

assume that the late medieval Church was a kind of monolithic whole, either wholly for or wholly against the Reformation. But when we unpack the late medieval Church we find that it is at least as complex as the Reformation, so that different pieces of it point in different directions as regards the Reformation: some for it, some against it. Certainly the evidence from Norwich supports this. For example, support for masses and prayers for the dead and for devotions to the saints seem to point against the Reformation; but on the other hand there is little evidence of enthusiasm for the papacy or of opposition to vernacular Bibles, which points in favour of the Reformation. Many other examples could be cited. Very complex contents are revealed in the late medieval box once the wrapping has been removed! It is not just a question of which of the five models a particular local church best fits into, but into which of the models do the individual pieces of that local church best fit. Moreover, we have complexity not only within a given town or locality, but also differences between town and countryside, between different regions of England, and so on.

This brings me to the second topic of this paper, regionalism in the English Church in the late Middle Ages. I shall be brief partly because of time and partly because the lack of research so far done on this subject makes adequate treatment impossible. In this latter respect the situation is different from the first topic. If anything, the connections between the late medieval Church and the Reformation have been discussed too much. My aim there was to shed a little new light on an old question. With regionalism in the late medieval English Church, however, I think the question has not been asked sufficiently. This is somewhat surprising since Reformation historians have made us familiar with the concept for the sixteenth century. Dickens, Elton, Haigh and others have made us familiar with, for example, the distinction between a more conservative and catholic North and West, a more radical and dissenting East and South. Regionalism is also a concept that has been applied to non-religious aspects of late medieval England. Thus we know that the English economy in the late Middle Ages was in many ways a collection of regional economies rather than a single national economy; political and social regionalism was highlighted by the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 and by the Wars of the Roses; there were regional dialects within the English language; and so on. Why not therefore apply the concept of regionalism to religious affairs? Should we not perhaps think of the late medieval English Church as a federation of regional churches more than as a single national church? I think that concentration on the question of whether the English Church was a national church or part of the international church, summed up in the Stubbs v Maitland controversy[44] and debates between Roman Catholic and Anglican

historians, has obscured this third possibility of a federation of regional churches. Once again the preoccupations of earlier historians, largely following confessional lines, have been allowed to frame the question. The point has, of course, been made in some respects. We know, for example, that there was a certain regionalism in liturgical matters: the different rites of Sarum, York, Hereford, Lincoln and so on. There were the great cycles of mystery plays with their regional centres: York, Chester, Coventry, Norwich and others. Dr Thomson has argued strongly for the regional nature of Lollardy.[45] I think these various ecclesiastical aspects of regionalism need to be brought together, and also applied to popular religion. This is what I would like to say a few words about, in the light of the evidence from Norwich. It has been done for some regions in other countries[46]; it needs to be done for England.

There are two aspects of this question: first, the regional church and its capital; secondly, the differences between the regional churches of England. For East Anglia there were all the normal institutional aspects of a regional church, some of them dating back to the early Anglo-Saxon period when England was indeed a heptarchy and the English Church followed these divisions. Thus the region of East Anglia, which had originally been one of the kingdoms in the heptarchy, was almost exactly co-extensive with the diocese of Norwich, with its bishop, cathedral and other aspects of episcopal organisation. The diocese had held its own ecclesiastical synods at least into the thirteenth century.[47] There were the distinctively East Anglian parish churches; a school in stained glass;[48] and the Norwich cycle of mystery plays.[49] The city of Norwich acted as the capital of this regional church in various ways, in addition to being the seat of the bishopric and containing the cathedral. It contained a range of religious institutions unparalleled in any other town in the diocese and especially in the countryside: the cathedral priory, four friaries, three colleges of secular priests, a nunnery, some 50 parish churches, hermits and anchorites, communities resembling beguinages, craft guilds and pious confraternities.[50] This must have made the city a religious magnet for East Anglia in all sorts of ways. Some of these ways we know about, for others we can only conjecture. Thus, no doubt a fair proportion of the city's large clerical population were from the countryside;[51] many monks of the cathedral priory, for example, appear to have come from the priory's estates around the diocese.[52] We know that Margery Kempe came from Lynn to Norwich to seek advice from both the anchoress Julian, author of *Revelations of Divine Love*, and Richard Caistor, the saintly vicar of St Stephen's parish.[53] No doubt many others came to Norwich from other parts of the diocese for counsel from various holy men and women in the city or to receive the

sacraments or hear sermons or attend services at various churches in the city. We know that Margery Kempe also came to Norwich to 'offer' at the cathedral before and after her pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and the sacrist's account rolls make it clear that many others came to their cathedral church to 'offer' there.[54] Indeed, a feature of East Anglian wills were bequests to Norwich cathedral, which many testators described as their 'mother' church.[55] Also, the annual performance of mystery plays, as well as other pageants and processions put on by the city's craft guilds and pious confraternities, must have been a tourist attraction.[56] This was explicitly stated by St Luke's guild, which said in 1527 that the 'many disguisings and pageants of the lives and martyrdoms of many holy saints', performed each year by the guild on Pentecost Monday, had attracted large crowds from the countryside to watch.[57] The only aspect in which Norwich does not appear to have been the religious capital of the region was Lollardy. This appears, as I said, to have made little impact on the city and yet to have been fairly widespread in some other parts of the diocese. In a sense, however, this absence of Lollardy may have increased Norwich's importance as a capital of orthodox religion.

The second aspect is that of differences between the regional churches of late medieval England. What light does Norwich shed on this topic? The basic difficulty is, as I said, that we have no regional studies of religion in late medieval England.[58] We are restricted to comparisons between individual towns or localities. These are of some help, however, especially for the major towns, which are likely to have been of more than local significance and representative, at least to some extent, of religion in the region. Norwich certainly highlights many of the variations. Its large number of parish churches reminds us of the great variety in this respect within late medieval England: between 40 and 50 in York, Lincoln and Norwich, but far fewer in other cities of comparable importance – Coventry, Bristol, Yarmouth and others. These differences must have had considerable effects upon the practice of religion in the cities. Like most regional capitals in England, Norwich was well-endowed with religious houses for men; but its friaries were large and probably more than usually active.[59] Norwich had an exceptional number of hermits and anchorites, and the only communities resembling beguinages known to have existed in medieval England.[60] Religious bequests in Norwich wills indicate an unusually high level of support for the local church. This is in comparison with the few other cities for which comparable studies have so far been made.[61] Hull, recently examined by Dr Heath, provides perhaps the strongest contrast. He found that the religion of Hull testators was 'remarkably insular, inert and shallow, untouched by the new devotions, perfunctory almost in the

old ones, uninterested in, and showing no deep acquaintance with, doctrine. . . Protestantism came to Hull . . . as rain to a dry land.'[62] Regarding craft guilds, on the other hand, those of Norwich, although numerous and with a fair range of religious activities, did not compare with the liveried companies and craft guilds of late medieval London, nor do they appear as impressive, or as having as many charitable or ceremonial activities, as the craft guilds of Coventry or York, provincial capitals of similar importance to Norwich. None of the craft guilds in Norwich, for example, had its own guild-hall or managed a hospital or an alms-house.[63] There was the relative absence of Lollardy and anti-clericalism in Norwich, as mentioned. Norwich was never a centre of Lollardy in the way that London, Bristol, Coventry and some other cities were.[64] There also appears to have been a relatively low level of lay initiative in running Norwich's parishes: the clergy seem to have been allowed to retain control.[65] These are further indications of a certain conformism, perhaps even of a lack of personal commitment, in the city's religion. So, in short, in many ways a remarkably vigorous and exuberant religion – almost Baroque and High Church – yet combined with elements of conformism: such would appear to have been the city's religion. Certainly Norwich seems to have had its own religious character and to have been significantly different from other English cities. That is really the point I want to make. And this suggests differences between the regional churches of late medieval England, if the regional capitals were in any way representative of their regions.

These are a few scattered and not fully digested thoughts about regionalism in the late medieval English Church. Obviously they need to he filled out with much more research. Also, I do not want its push the point too far. Clearly there were other loyalties and points of reference in the English Church: for example, Western Christendom, the national church, the town, the parish. Nevertheless I think the regional church was one important point of reference, and I do not think it has yet been considered sufficiently. I hope that I have at least prompted a few thoughts about it.

Chapter 7

Religious Practice in Norwich

> All shall be well and all manner of things shall be well.
> God all-wisdom is our kindly mother.
> Thus was I learned that love is our Lord's meaning . . . and in this love
> he hath made all things profitable to us.
>
> Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*[1]

Norwich's prominent place in medieval England is apparent throughout the second section of this book. This chapter seeks to bring together the various facets of Christianity in the city and to relate them more generally to the broader canvas of religious life in medieval Europe. Norwich was a remarkably religious city by the standards of Western Christendom as a whole. It might, indeed, be possible to argue that it was Europe's *most* religious city. A few disclaimers are, however, required at the outset. In terms of quantity – the number of Christians, the number of churches and so forth – there is no suggestion that Norwich can be compared with, say, Paris or Venice or even London. Norwich was never one of the largest urban centres of medieval Europe in terms of population. On the other hand, it was more than a provincial capital. It was a city of European standing and has a right to be compared with other such cities. It has been argued that the population reached a peak of around 25,000 or even more in the 1330s, rather than the previously proposed figures of about half that number.[2] Moreover, Norwich's close links with the Continent, especially the Low Countries, both geographically and through trade, meant that it was more 'European' than the other provincial capitals of medieval England: York, Coventry and Bristol. Indeed, one might say that late medieval England had two European cities: London and Norwich.

The argument, therefore, about Norwich being the most religious city in medieval Europe is not just qualitative: premised only on the intensity of

religion in the city, irrespective of its size. It is based, rather, on a mixture of quality and quantity, so that Norwich's standing as a European city is an integral part of the argument. A parallel claim might be made for, say, Siena in northern Italy: a city of similar importance and of exceptional religiosity.[3] The suggestion would not be regarded as outrageous if made for Siena and it bears examination for Norwich, too. The words 'most religious' also need some justification. Can we say that one community or country is *more* religious than another, varying in time and according to circumstances? It may seem foolish to ask such intimate questions at all, since they are surely answerable by God alone. The issue is, moreover, an inner one that is not susceptible to outer historical verification. My sympathies are somewhat with this view but not completely so. If it were wholly true, church history would lose much of its interest. Moreover, while our inner state is beyond, it is not wholly beyond: there seems some link between outer manifestations and inner reality. At least, the following chapter proceeds upon this assumption.

At the pinnacle of religious fame, Norwich compared favourably with any other European city of the time, thanks to the star attraction of Julian of Norwich, the anchoress and mystic. Her single book, *Revelations* (or *Showings*) *of Divine Love*, surviving in a long and a short version, places her among the greatest mystical writers of all times and all religions. The love of God, the motherhood and feminine nature of God, her optimistic tone, epitomised in the words revealed to her, 'All shall be well and all manner of things shall be well',[4] sound well to modern ears and offer the hope of salvation for all people. Currently Julian may be the most popular of all medieval Christian mystics, alongside Hildegard of Bingen. Every aspect of her theology and spirituality seems to have been explored.[5] Three critical editions of her *Revelations* have appeared in the last 25 years;[6] an anthology of excerpts from the *Revelations* has sold over 100,000 copies worldwide, and has seen translations into Japanese and Korean.[7] Other attractive features of Julian's spirituality have been identified: heaven is becoming our true selves; how our deficiencies are transformed into good rather than annihilated; God as a 'playful lover'; Julian's pastoral concern for people living in the world.[8]

Was Julian an isolated peak or part of a much larger mountain range? She did not appear unusual in her lifetime, rather being part of a large and flourishing tradition of hermits and anchorites in Norwich. Margery Kempe came from Lynn to seek her counsel and there is further evidence of her respected position within the religious life of the city; on the other hand, there is no evidence of interest in her writings or a special cult to her during her lifetime

or immediately after her death.[9] Her book of *Revelations* has come down to us through the almost chance survival of a handful of manuscripts, a single fifteenth-century one for the shorter version and a few from the seventeenth century for the longer.[10] It was only in the second half of the twentieth century that Julian suddenly achieved international fame. It might be argued that late medieval Norwich was unable to see a genius in its midst, or perhaps that Julian regarded her thoughts as so unusual that she sought to keep them secret. My preference is to think the quiet respect she enjoyed in her lifetime, combined with the exceptional veneration in which she is held today, indicate a remarkable woman who was representative of the city's deep Christianity.

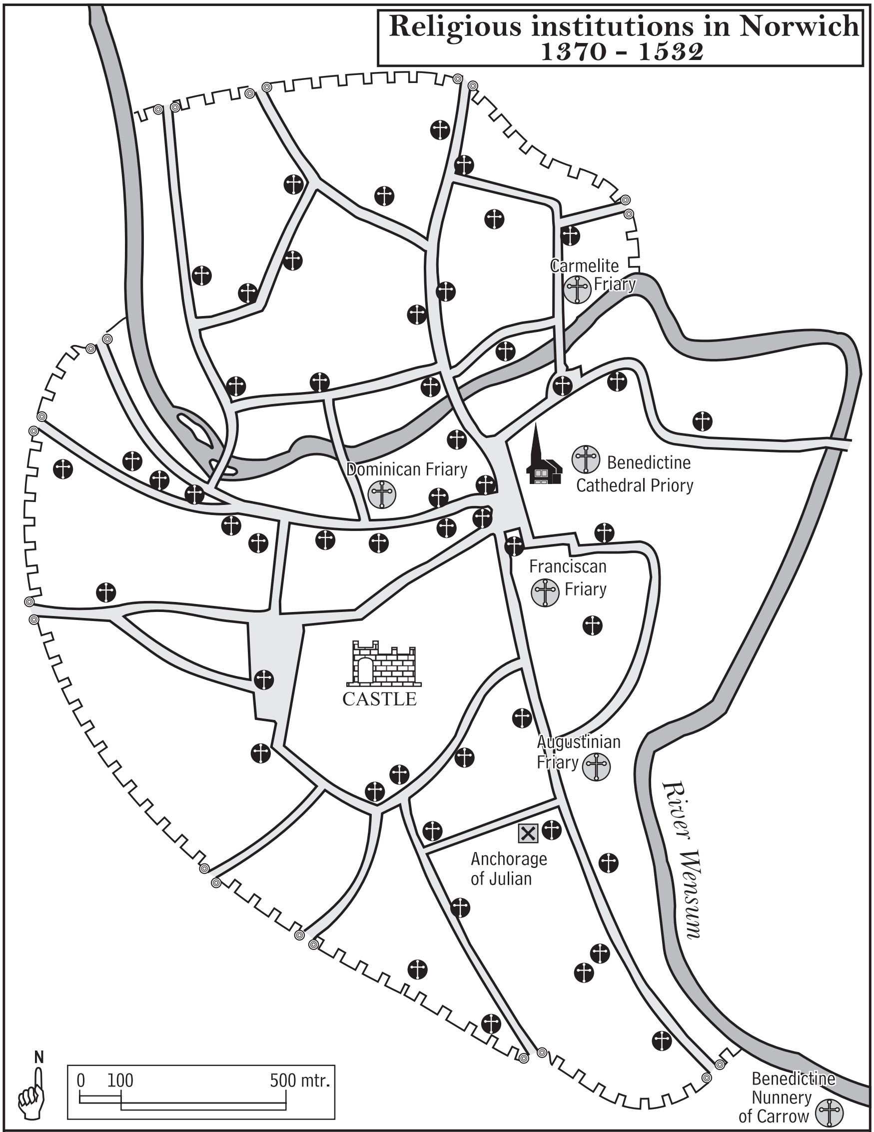
Some 50 other hermits and anchorites are known to have lived in medieval Norwich: half a dozen of them in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, then a long gap until the appearance of Julian at the end of the fourteenth century, and the others in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The number, so far as is known, was substantially more than for any other city in medieval England, with the possible exception of much larger London, and seems remarkable by the standards of any European city. None of them has acquired a reputation in any way comparable to Julian's, but the characters of several of them emerge from the records. They divided roughly equally between men and women; and while a number of them were priests or members of religious orders, both male and female, the majority were lay men and women. All the women were anchoresses, that is to say living in a cell, or 'anchorage', which was usually attached to a religious house or a parish church. While some of the men were similarly tied to an anchorage, hence called 'anchors', more of them were described as 'hermits', who, as well as providing various material services to the community, such as looking after a gate or bridge of the city, were free to wander.[11]

The most colourful of them was Thomas Scrope. Born shortly before 1400, possibly the grandson, legitimate or otherwise, of Richard le Scrope, first Baron Scrope of Bolton,[12] he became a friar at the Carmelite house in Norwich, but, according to John Bale, writing in the mid-sixteenth century and himself once a friar there, he left the friary and was to be seen around 1425, 'clad in a hair shirt and a sack and girded with an iron chain, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God and proclaiming that the new Jerusalem, the bride of the Lamb, was about to come down from heaven'. Bale believed that Scrope's eccentric behaviour upset his religious superior, Thomas Netter, the prior provincial of the English Carmelites, and that a frightened Scrope returned to his friary in Norwich, this time as an anchor. He remained there for some 20 years, during which time he appears to have written several books. He then

reverted to an active life. He went to Rhodes as a papal legate, was consecrated bishop of Dromore in Ireland, and acted as a suffragan bishop in the diocese of Norwich for some 28 years. Finally, according to Bale, he spent each Friday of the last years of his life as a barefoot itinerant preacher in the diocese, dying in 1492 aged almost 100.[13]

Another character was Richard Ferneys. He lived as a hermit in the city for many years in the mid-fifteenth century, probably moving his residence to different places there and ending as 'hermit of Newbridge', one of the bridges over the Wensum, though whether he was responsible for its upkeep is unclear. At least in his early years as a recluse he may have journeyed outside Norwich. Thus, in 1429, in the earliest known reference to him as a hermit, he was bequeathed the large sum of £40 – the approximate equivalent of eight years' annual income for a building labourer – by Robert Baxter, a former mayor of the city, 'to make a pilgrimage for me to Rome, going round there 15 times in a great circle, and also to Jerusalem, doing in both places as a true pilgrim does'.[14] We are not told whether he accepted the challenge, but Baxter presumably had some knowledge of the kind of things he might be prepared to undertake. Towards the end of his life, Ferneys himself made a will that provides a glimpse of his comfortable living conditions and of the society of other hermits and anchorites with whom he maintained contact. His bequests totalled several pounds in money and a variety of household items, and his beneficiaries included two attendants – one being described as 'my boy' (*puer meus*) and the other, a woman, as 'my guardian or nurse' (*custos mea*), as well as several other hermits and anchorites in the city.[15] These hermits and anchorites were appreciated and encouraged by the citizenry: a tribute to Norwich's support for unusual forms of religious life. One in five surviving wills made by local people in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries contained bequests to them, substantially more than in London and other cities.[16]

Notable, too, is the presence in Norwich of two or three communities closely resembling continental beguinages, which are the only such communities identifiable in medieval England. An unknown number of women, variously described as 'sisters living together' and 'sisters dedicated to chastity' are recorded as residents of a tenement in St Swithin's parish from 1427 to 1444; a second group of three women, similarly designated as 'sisters' or 'poor women', 'under a vow of chastity' and 'dedicated to God', occupied another tenement nearby in St Laurence's parish from about 1442 to 1472; there may have been a third group in the parish of St Peter Hungate at about the same time. Although the words 'beguines' or 'beguinages' do not appear in the records, there are striking resemblances, strengthened by the frequent



References

Cathedral

Communities of Religious orders

Parish Churches

references to the tenement in which the second group lived as 'recently belonging to John Asger': he was probably the merchant from Bruges of that name who became mayor of Norwich in 1426. The tenement may have been a gift from him to the women, thus linking Norwich with the Low Countries, a centre of the beguine movement.[17]

The hermits, anchorites and communities resembling beguinages are worthy of attention for several reasons. They form one of the most notable features of religion in the city and constitute an important reason why it may be considered an exceptionally religious place; in this respect Norwich surpassed all other English cities.[18] The support given to them by the citizens as well as the fact that they represented a 'lay' movement ties them into popular religion at a grass-roots level. They situate religion in Norwich within a European and wider world, which encompasses Thomas Scrope's departure for the island of Rhodes, the bequest to Richard Ferneys for him to go on pilgrimage to Rome and Jerusalem, possible links between beguines in Norwich and Bruges, and the international fame of Julian of Norwich today.

Another remarkable feature of the religion of medieval Norwich – the one that probably strikes visitors most today – is the parish churches. The first decisive development seems to have occurred sometime in the eleventh century. The Domesday Survey of 1086 recorded between 49 and 54 chapels (*capellae*) and churches (*ecclesiae*) in the city, the majority of which were the 43 chapels that, it says, 'the burgesses hold' (*tenent burgenses*).[19] Subsequently, in ways and at times that are obscure, these churches and chapels developed into the approximately 60 parish churches that the city contained in the mid-thirteenth century. Thereafter there was a gradual decline in numbers – two churches were absorbed into the Dominican and Augustinian friaries, some were pulled down, others were reduced to the status of chapels-of-ease – but we can say with some confidence that in 1520 the number stood at 46. To a certain extent the four friaries (Franciscan, Dominican, Carmelite and Augustinian), with their large churches, preachers and religious services, challenged the role of the parish churches. Nevertheless, the small drop in numbers from about 1250 represents a development rather than a decline in importance. Between the fourteenth and early sixteenth century almost every parish church in the city that was not demolished was extensively rebuilt on a grander scale. Larger buildings meant that fewer were needed, especially following the dramatic slump in population occasioned by plague. Certainly these new churches, as any visitor to Norwich can still see, must have been large enough to accommodate the citizens; except perhaps for a short time in the

early fourteenth century, if the higher estimate of a population of around 25,000 in the 1330s is correct.[20]

How remarkable were Norwich's parishes and parish churches? For England the number was high but not wholly exceptional. London had over twice as many for a much larger population, while York and Lincoln had only slightly fewer than Norwich for somewhat fewer residents. Yet the number of parish churches in English towns – principally those that were already major towns in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, when parish churches were being built in great numbers throughout the country – was notably high, proportional to population, by the standards of Europe as a whole. Venice, for example, one of the largest cities in Western Christendom, had about 70 parishes; and Bruges, at one time the largest city in the Low Countries, with about 41,000 inhabitants in the 1340s, had only 12 during the late middle ages, though some of these boasted more than one imposing parish church. While it would be foolish to push the argument to the point of claiming that the number of parish churches in Norwich was wholly exceptional, it was nevertheless, by any standards, in terms of the city's population, very high.[21]

In terms of quality, too, the record is impressive; the churches were not empty shells devoid of purpose. The evidence to this effect comes mostly from the late middle ages. When the bishop of Norwich made an official visitation of the city's parish churches in 1492, he found at least one priest serving almost every church and a total of no fewer than 89 serving the 46 churches altogether.[22] And when the archdeacon of Norwich undertook a similar inspection in 1368, he noted in almost all of them a striking quantity of items for the celebration of the liturgy, and virtually all the service-books that Archbishops Winchelsey and Reynolds of Canterbury had regarded as obligatory for parish churches in the southern province to possess. St Peter Mancroft, the largest and grandest of the parish churches, had the following collection, mostly for the celebration of the eucharist: ten complete sets of vestments for a priest, deacon and sub-deacon, each set usually comprising a cope, chasuble, two tunicles and three albs; 14 other sets of vestments for single priests, five other copes and four capes for boys; nine frontispieces for altars and large quantities of altar linen, as well as carpets and pillows; eight chalices, two cups for hosts and a pyx; dishes, cruets, candlesticks, (hand-)bells, crosses, four banners, four thuribles, an aspersorium, a vessel for chrism oil, a mitre and a pastoral staff; and various service-books, including seven missals, six breviaries and three Psalters. The collections of many other churches parallelled on a smaller scale that of St Peter's, where in the early

sixteenth century an even more lavish collection of service-books, vestments, plate and other ornaments was recorded.[23]

Evidence of lay piety also comes from the wills of the citizens, which survive in significant numbers from 1370 onwards. More testators made bequests to parish churches than to any other religious institution: 95 per cent of the laity left something to at least one parish church. Some bequests were of large sums of money or costly items, indicating special interest in the welfare of a particular church. For example, John Coppyng, a mercer, left to St Andrew's in 1430 the money needed to buy a missal costing up to 20 marks (£13 6s. 8d.) and a vestment costing up to £20; John Terry, a former mayor, left 40 marks (£26 13s. 4d.) to St John's Maddermarket in 1524 to buy a silver and gilt cross; John Gilbert, another former mayor, left the munificent sum of 100 marks to St Andrew's to buy a vestment or an ornament. Alice Carre left to St Stephen's parish church her best coral beads to beautify the images of various saints on their feast-days, and her small coral beads to be 'daily about the image of St Anne'; John Basse wanted his best tippet to be decorated at his own expense with buttons and tassels and given to St Martin of Coslany 'to cover the sacrament on dead days and interment days'. Testamentary evidence also helps to explain and document the extensive rebuilding of the city's parish churches in the late middle ages. Bartholomew Appleyard, for example, left £20 in 1386 to lead the roof of his parish church, St Andrew's; Richard Browne, a former mayor, left 40 marks in 1461 to build the steeple of Holy Cross, so that he might be 'remembered together with my brother Sygrim [alderman Ralph Segryme] and all my good friends'. Robert Pert left £20 to the *economi* of St Peter Mancroft in 1445 to pay for a new gable at the east end of the church; this was in the middle of the period during which the church was completely rebuilt. It is interesting that he entrusted the money to parishioners, not to the clergy. John Reynolds, a grocer, offered the parishioners of St Andrew's £6 13s. 4d. in 1499 for a window, if they built a new church. He too expected the initiative for constructing the church to come from the parishioners and entrusted his money to them rather than to the clergy. But it would be wrong to see much of a divide between the laity and the priesthood in this matter; the parish clergy made plenty of similar bequests to the churches for which they had been responsible.[24]

These bequests touch on the wider issues of the art and architecture of Norwich's parish churches, which were of pressing concern to the elite of the medieval city. Suffice it to say here that St Peter Mancroft surely rivals in beauty and elegance any parish church anywhere, while the surviving panels of the two late medieval retables depicting scenes from the life of Christ

which are now preserved in the cathedral – the so-called Despenser retable, kept in St Luke's chapel, and the panels formerly in the parish church of St Michael-at-Plea, now preserved in St Saviour's chapel – provide a glimpse of the high level of artistic achievement in the city.[25] This was placed unreservedly at the disposal of its religious institutions.

Any city that claims – or whose claims are put forward – to be the most religious city in medieval Europe requires a tradition of intellectual eminence. Norwich's claims are stronger than might first appear. There was no medieval university in the city, but recent research suggests that too much importance should not be accorded to Oxford and Cambridge during this period, and that intellectual life in late medieval England had many foci.[26] London, for example, with its Inns of Court, the royal court, houses of religious orders and other intellectual attractions, provided some such centres outside the two universities; Norwich and York, each with four friaries and a cathedral, a large secular clergy, an educated laity and many schools, offered others.[27] The Franciscan friary in Norwich attracted students from abroad including the future Pope Alexander V; conversely the cathedral priory exported its learned monk Adam Easton to Rome, where he became a cardinal.[28]

The number of beneficed parish clergy – rectors and vicars – who are recorded as university graduates when they were appointed rose markedly towards the end of the middle ages: from 8 per cent (12 out of 158) between 1370 and 1449 to 32 per cent (23 out of 71) between 1450 and 1499 and 42 per cent (25 out of 60) between 1500 and 1532. The evidence for the unbeneficed clergy – parish chaplains and stipendiary and chantry priests, who together made up the large majority of the secular clergy of the city – is much scarcer but it is clear that, while university graduates among them were much fewer than among the beneficed clergy, they were not unknown.[29]

Of the books of the secular clergy, the most intimate and revealing picture comes from the inventory of the goods of John Baker. He was probably the rector of two churches in the city, St John Maddermarket and All Saints Ber Street; he appears not to have been a university graduate and died, probably in middle age and still rector of both churches, in 1518. The inventory, drawn up after his death, mentions 26 books by name and '20 other small books'. The biggest group of the identified books consisted of legal works, mostly of canon law: the *Decrees*, the *Decretals* and *Sext*, which comprised the three main parts of the basic text of medieval canon law, the *Corpus iuris canonici*; a book by William Lyndwood (d. 1446), probably his work on English canon law called *Provinciale*; commentaries on canon law by three foreigners, Bernard of Compostella (d. 1267) from Spain, William Durandus (d. 1296) from France

and Italy, and Panormitanus (d. 1445) from Italy; and dictionaries of legal terms and abbreviations. Baker clearly took his parochial responsibilities very seriously, especially when it came to preaching. There were five collections of sermons by, probably, the English Carmelite friar, Richard Maidstone (d. 1396), John Fisher (d. 1535), Bishop of Rochester, two Dominican friars, Vincent Ferrer (d. 1419) from France and Johannes Herolt (d. 1468) from Germany, and an anonymous collection as well. The remaining books were *Legenda aurea*, the famous collection of saints' lives by James de Voragine (d. 1298), Archbishop of Genoa; two other works by German Dominicans, Albert the Great (d. 1280) and John Nider (d. 1438); a Latin-English dictionary; a breviary in two volumes; and a Bible, though it is unclear whether this was the Latin vulgate or an English translation. The books indicate conservative tastes and a keen interest in the law of the church. At the same time, the collections of sermons, in particular, suggest a pastorally minded priest; and the number of works by foreigners reflects an outlook that was far from insular.[30]

Baker's is the only surviving inventory listing the goods of a secular priest of pre-Reformation Norwich. Since no books at all were mentioned in his will we may reasonably conclude that ownership was presumably much wider among other members of the clergy than the surviving testamentary evidence suggests. Books mentioned in these wills are, even so, quite numerous and we can say, in brief, that they reflect conservative tastes, like Baker's. On the other hand, many works were comparatively recent classics in their field; and the number by authors from other European countries is again impressive.[31] Maybe, the secular clergy were also able to make use of the libraries of the cathedral priory, the friaries and other religious houses.

Wills also provide some evidence of the books owned by the laity, though here, too, ownership was probably more extensive than the wills suggest. One wonders, again, whether some testators drew upon the resources of religious houses or of the secular clergy, such as the learned masters of St Giles's hospital, many of whom were graduates and who maintained close relations with members of the city's ruling élite. Most of the books were standard liturgical works, chiefly missals, breviaries, primers and psalters. The only Bible mentioned before the end of Henry VIII's reign was that left in 1542 by William Cannered, a butcher: it is unclear whether it was a Latin or English version. Three women, all widows, making their wills towards the end of the fifteenth century, owned interesting collections that included works by or about saints and mystics from abroad. Katherine Kerre left a 'book of St Katherine' (of Alexandria, or Siena, or Genoa?); Isabel Liston bequeathed to

her daughter a 'book of Saint Margaret's life' (Margaret of Antioch or of Scotland?) and an 'English book called *Partonope*', presumably a version of the twelfth-century French romance, *Partonopeus de Blois.* Margaret Purdans left an 'English psalter' to a priest and her 'small psalter' to her son. Her taste in reading matter is further reflected in her gift of two books to convents of nuns: 'Le doctrine of the herte', which was probably a translation of *De doctrina cordis*, the treatise addressed to a woman on how to lead a devout life usually ascribed to bishop Grosseteste of Lincoln, and an 'English book of Saint Bridget' (probably containing the prayers and mystical writings of the popular Swedish saint). To a certain Alice Barley, Margaret bequeathed 'a book called Hylton', almost certainly by the fourteenth-century English mystic, Walter Hilton.[32]

Books were, of course, only one way through which the citizens could grow in knowledge of Christianity. Other ways came through hermits and anchorites living in the city; and by attendance at parish churches with their regular liturgical round and other communal activities. Hopefully, too, the laity benefited from the learning of the clergy and vice versa. There was also instruction through preaching. We should not, however, forget that religious music also helped to inspire belief, for singing was at the centre of the liturgy, including the divine office sung in the cathedral and various religious houses, not least St Giles's hospital, which possessed a sizeable choir trained in polyphony and no fewer than three organs. Chantries, which were numerous in Norwich, could offer plainsong and other, more elaborate, forms of music: St Peter Mancroft, with its many chantries, both perpetual and temporary, may have provided an almost daily concert of religious music.[33] Taken together, and avoiding an undue concentration upon either book-learning or the importance of Oxford and Cambridge, the evidence of Norwich suggests a deep and creative knowledge of Christianity, one that points to an exceptionally religious city in the best sense.

Pilgrimages were both a form of devotion – through penance or thanksgiving or petition – and a way of encountering the wider Christian world. Robert Baxter's legacy to the hermit Richard Ferneys to make a pilgrimage for him to Rome and Jerusalem is noted above. Several other citizens left bequests in their wills for vicarious pilgrimages. Many of the shrines were in East Anglia. Thomas Oudolff, for example, a priest who was a widower, instructed his executors to hire one man to go 'naked in his shirt' to the Holy Rood of Beccles and another to go barefoot to Our Lady of Walsingham, which, along with St Thomas of Canterbury, was the most popular shrine in England. Abroad the most favoured destination was Rome, where the

priest-pilgrim was often instructed to say masses for the testator and his family and friends. The English hospice in Rome was host to a number of pilgrims from Norwich: an average of some two a year in those years between 1479 and 1514 for which records survive. Edmund Brown, a merchant who made his will in 1446, followed Robert Baxter in his interest in long pilgrimages. He instructed his executors to hire one man for seven shillings to go on foot to St Thomas of Canterbury, another for five marks to journey to St James of Compostella, and a third, for a sum to be negotiated, to go to the shrine of the Holy Blood at Wilsnack in Germany.[34]

Norwich, principally its cathedral, was also a centre for pilgrimages. Margery Kempe came to the cathedral to 'offer' there both before and after her long journey to the Holy Land.[35] The account rolls of the cathedral priory record donations to various shrines there from the late thirteenth to the early sixteenth centuries. A steady stream of offerings 'to the high altar' peaked at about £120 for each of several years around the Jubilee of 1400, when the priory obtained a special papal indulgence. Smaller sums were collected at the shrines of St Mary and St William and of two bishops of Norwich, Walter Suffield (d. 1257) and John Salmon (d. 1325). Richard Caistor, vicar of St Stephen's parish in Norwich from 1402 until his death in 1420, enjoyed a reputation for holiness that drew pilgrims to his grave from as far afield as Kent.[36] Since the monks owned the living, they presumably shared in its success, although by far the most important and lucrative of their late medieval shrines was at St Leonard's priory, a cell of the mother house just outside the city walls to the east of Bishop's bridge. Martin Heal has recently analysed the dramatic rise in revenues (reaching a remarkable total of £43 in 1454–55) apparent during the fifteenth century, as floods of pilgrims came to venerate a lavishly decorated statue of the patron saint. Nor did visitors simply offer a token penny: from Sir John Fastolf came a piece of crystal containing silver relics; while the Yorkist knight, Sir Andrew Ogard, presented a silver image of a boy, perhaps an *ex voto* for his own sick son. An image of the earl of Suffolk also hung there in 1425, along with an impressive array of jewellery.[37]

Craft guilds and pious confraternities formed another notable feature of the city's religion. Between the mid-thirteenth and early sixteenth centuries – the golden age of these associations in Norwich as elsewhere – approaching a hundred crafts and trades in the city are mentioned as having their own guilds (or taking part in guild-like activities). In addition, records indicate about half that number of pious confraternities, which were usually attached to

parish churches and religious houses rather than to crafts or trades.[38] The primary role of the guilds was the economic, social and political regulation of their respective crafts or trades, but they also had important religious functions. A central feature was the annual 'day' of the guild, usually the feast day of the saint to which it was dedicated, comprising a mixture of social and spiritual activities: a mass for living and dead members, other devotions and finally a fraternal banquet. Many guilds made provision for members in need, not least so far as funerals and obits were concerned. They were most visible, however, when taking part in various civic and religious processions. Ordinances issued by the city government in 1449 ruled that: 'All tho persones that shall be clad in the clothing of craftis . . . shall at all tymes be charged to all walkings [and] ridings to the worship of the advow [patron] of the craft on the principal day.' There is additional evidence of communal processions undertaken by all the guilds, together with the mayor, sheriffs and aldermen, on major feast days, notably All Saints, Christmas, Epiphany and Corpus Christi.[39]

By the eve of the Reformation the guilds of the city were performing a cycle of twelve mystery plays on Whit (Pentecost) Monday. As at York, each play was probably acted several times in different parts of the city, being drawn round on a movable float or cart. The twelve plays in the cycle were: *The Creation of the World*; *Hell*; *Paradise* (the only play whose text survives); *Abel and Cain*; *Noah's Ship*; *Abraham and Isaac*, *Moses and Aaron with the Children of Israel and Pharaoh with his Knights*; *The Conflict of David and Goliath*; *The Birth of Christ with Shepherds and the Three Kings of Cologne*; *The Baptism of Christ*; *The Resurrection*; and *The Holy Ghost*.[40] It has been suggested that these plays provided the inspiration for the masons who carved the stone bosses in the nave of the cathedral. They certainly did much to transmit knowledge of the Bible to ordinary men and women.[41]

Many of the activities of the pious confraternities appear similar to those of the guilds, though information about most of them is fragmentary and extends little beyond knowledge of their existence. The most famous was St George's, which was given a royal charter in 1417 and was effectively united to the city government in 1452, so that the outgoing mayor of the city automatically became the head, or alderman, of the confraternity. Its account rolls, which survive from 1420 to 1547, give details of its large membership, numbering some 200 in the early sixteenth century, the material and spiritual help it afforded to members, living and dead, and its celebrations on the feast of St George. The latter comprised mass in the cathedral, an elaborate procession and pageant depicting the exploits of their saint and a lavish

banquet.[42] Norwich was not exceptional in its guilds and confraternities. They did not compare in importance with the livery companies, craft guilds and confraternities of London, still less with the Scuole of Venice.[43] They show, nevertheless, that Norwich participated in this important aspect of medieval urban religion in a way that was appropriate to its standing as a major provincial capital.

'The second commandment is this: You shall love your neighbour as yourself' (Mark 12: 31). Charity towards one's neighbour is an integral part of most religions, including Christianity. Norwich boasted many charitable institutions, which were supplemented by private philanthropic initiatives on a grand scale.[44] The evidence of wills reinforces the strong sense of personal piety and social obligation already described. Almost two in every five testators from the city, in the late Middle Ages, left one or more bequests to the sick-houses (originally leper houses) just outside the gates – usually a bequest to each house or to each individual living in them – while more than one in three gave to St Paul's hospital. These figures appear substantially higher than those for late medieval London, where fewer than a fifth of testators remembered a hospital. Some 16 per cent of testators from Norwich left a bequest to prisoners in the guildhall or in the castle. Many set aside the residue of their estate, or part of it, to be disposed for their soul 'in alms to the poor or in works of mercy and charity'; some left money for the poor to pray for them or to attend their funeral services. The bequests of two testators stand out for their scale and imagination. Robert Jannys, a wealthy grocer and former mayor who made his will in 1530, wanted a penny to be given to each of 80 poor persons every Friday for 20 years – a bequest that, if fulfilled, would have amounted to almost £350. He also bequeathed £20 for the marriages of 'maidens', presumably dowries for poor brides, to be distributed at the rate of 20s. each. The most radical approach came from Richard Caistor, the vicar whose reputation for holiness is discussed above. Apart from a bequest of £10 for buying two antiphonaries for his parish church, he wanted all his wealth to be given to the poor on the grounds that 'the goods of the Church, according to canon law, belong to the poor'.[45]

It is now time to return to the suggestion that Norwich was the most religious city in medieval Europe – by focusing on two points: the apparent absence of heresy in the city and, secondly, the harmony of old and new. Heresy, at least when understood as organised dissent within the Christian community, appears to have been almost non-existent in England before the appearance of John Wyclif and Lollardy in the late fourteenth century. There-

after England, along with Hussite Bohemia, was home to the most serious dissenting movement anywhere in Western Christendom. The apparent failure of Lollardy, a vibrant reform movement within Christianity, to make much impression in Norwich is remarkable. The city was never a centre of its adherents as were London, Coventry, Bristol, Leicester and some other towns of southern and middle England.

The most crucial evidence for this relative absence comes from the records of the prosecution of Lollards conducted by Bishop Alnwick of Norwich throughout his diocese between 1428 and 1431. They form the fullest records of heresy trials anywhere in late medieval England and, of the 50 or so individuals who were convicted at them and whose places of residence were mentioned (only a handful were not), only two came from Norwich: Thomas Wade, a tailor, and the wife of a certain John Weston. A few other comments made at the trials suggest that some citizens had been influenced by Lollardy.[46]

Either side of this prosecution there are only a few isolated hints of heresy in the city before the start of the English Reformation. A somewhat vaguely worded complaint from the cathedral priory in about 1360, that the friars of Norwich were preaching 'against the norm of sound doctrine and the liberty of the Church', probably refers to their criticisms of the Benedictine monks rather than to more serious heresy.[47] John Bale, the early Protestant reformer and erstwhile Carmelite, maintained that Richard Caistor, the vicar of St Stephen's, was a Wycliffite, but there is no evidence to substantiate this claim, beyond his evident austerity and love for the poor. The martyrologist John Foxe said that a priest from Norwich called Thomas was degraded from the priesthood and burnt in the village of Eckeles (almost certainly Eccles in south Norfolk) in 1510, presumably for heresy. Francis Blomefield claimed (without citing any sources) that Thomas Bilney, who was also sent to the stake for his evangelical activities, was a native of Norfolk, probably of Norwich or East Bilney, and Foxe recounts that he had preached in Norfolk before his arrest by Bishop Tunstall of London in 1527. Bilney was, indeed, arrested for the last time at Norwich in 1531, when Thomas More asserted that he had 'infected various people of the city before'. His only identifiable disciple there was an anchoress attached to the Dominican friary, probably Katherine Mann: he gave her two controversial works by Tyndale – *Obedience of a Christian Man* and his translation of the New Testament – but said, to calm her conscience, that he had never taught her anything heretical.[48]

There is no reason to think that the apparent absence of heresy results only from a scarcity of evidence. Certainly the diocese of Norwich had a succession

of bishops noted for their concern about Lollardy: Henry Despenser (1370–1406), John Wakeryng (1415–25), William Alnwick (1426–36), Thomas Brown (1436–45) and Richard Nykke (1501–35), in particular.[49] They might be expected to have been especially vigilant towards their capital city. The fact, however, that Lollardy was comparatively strong in other parts of East Anglia, shown notably by the trials of 1428–31, makes its relative absence from Norwich all the more remarkable.[50] One line of argument might be that Lollardy was suppressed rather than rejected, that fear kept it out of the city. It is true that many of those found guilty in the 1428–31 trials, though from outside, suffered within it: three were burnt to death as relapsed heretics; others were ordered to be beaten or to undergo 'solemn penance' there.[51] In the early sixteenth century, moreover, several people from other parts of the diocese who were convicted of heresy were executed in Norwich.[52] Did fear of punishment restrain potential Lollards or simply force the movement underground? There may be some truth in the argument but it does not seem an adequate explanation.

The more likely eventuality is that, because religion in Norwich was so rich and diverse that it catered for the tastes of almost everyone, the inhabitants did not feel the need for, or the attraction of, Lollardy as they might have in a more spiritually barren landscape. How then is the success of the Reformation in the city and Norwich's subsequent Nonconformist tradition to be explained? This is a big question that is difficult to answer. It is true that there were outside factors, notably the arrival of the Strangers, some 5,000 Protestants from the Low Countries, in the late sixteenth century?[53] But there may be unease with the argument that the Reformation was largely imposed on Norwich from above or from outside, overwhelmingly against the wishes of the citizens, as some scholars have argued for the country as a whole.[54] Late medieval Norwich was an unusually religious city, and there was a great change in the forms of worship as the Reformation progressed. It rapidly made the transition from a kind of almost Baroque, high-church Christianity to becoming a puritan stronghold. If Christianity, or religion more generally, is regarded as something static, then this change is very difficult to explain. If, on the other hand, religion is envisaged as more ongoing and developing, changes of outward form will cause much less surprise; a very religious community will, and should, grow and change in this way while remaining deeply religious. Indeed, to remain static would indicate a lack of depth to the faith.[55]

The second point is the remarkable harmony or blending of old and new in the religion of medieval Norwich. Or, to extend the point further, the way

in which the people of the city were able to maintain both creativity and continuity in their religion, much to suit all tastes, preserving depth and variety, while also achieving relative harmony and unity. This genius constitutes an important reason for Norwich to be considered medieval Europe's most religious city.

We should not, however, ignore the other side of the coin. What about the assault of 1272, when the citizens attacked the cathedral priory, looted and burned it and killed some 13 of the priory's servants and tenants? Tension between city and priory persisted, acute at times, and erupted again in 'Gladman's Insurrection' in 1453, though on this occasion nobody was killed.[56] There was, too, the great blot on the city's reputation regarding its Jewish population. In 1144 the death of a young apprentice skinner of the city, William, led to accusations, almost certainly false, that some Jews had ritually crucified him. It was the first time this kind of story, later known as the blood libel, received widespread notice in England and thereby Norwich became instrumental in the development of anti-Semitism both at home and abroad. Attacks on Jews occurred in Norwich, as in many English towns, in 1190, and they were finally expelled from the city, as from the rest of England, exactly a century later.[57] At a different level, the fullest recorded visitation of the city's parishes in the middle ages, that by the bishop of Norwich in 1492, provides evidence of considerable lay absenteeism from the mass. Nine men and women were accused of not attending their parish churches on Sundays and feast-days. Three publicans were charged with keeping their taverns open during divine service. Of one woman it was alleged that 'she observes an evil custom with various people from neighbouring households, who sit with her and drink during the time of service'. At another visitation in 1430, more wilful obstinacy had been alleged against two men from Catton in the suburbs of the city: 'They deride divine service and are unwilling to hear mass on feastdays, chattering continuously and obstructing the service.' These and other visitations, along with court records, document various cases of sexual immorality and bad behaviour on the part of both laity and clergy.[58]

This shadow side certainly existed, though it has a context. The citizens' disputes with the cathedral priory involved economic, legal and political issues more than religious ones, and there were good day-to-day relations between the two sides as well as sporadic conflicts. An illuminating snapshot of cordiality is provided by an account roll of the priory's cellarer for the year 1431–32, which records payments for 'minstrels of the city and other players performing before the lord prior, the mayor of the city and others on the day

of the banquet at Christmas'. A Christmas dinner was held then and in other years, bringing together both the priory and the city government. In the case of the visitations, it is noticeable that most complaints came from the laity: rather than giving vent to anti-clericalism, they wanted better standards to be observed both by themselves and by individual members of the clergy. Nothing suggests, moreover, notably low standards in Norwich compared with other towns and cities. The attacks on Jews and their expulsion must be seen in the sad context of anti-Semitism throughout Western Christendom; they were not peculiar to Norwich. Intolerance is a great danger of religious fervour, yet the latter's more positive aspects should be appreciated, notwithstanding this inherent weakness. It may be counted to the city's credit, moreover, that the cult of St William, with its encouragement of anti-Semitism, appears to have been quickly cold-shouldered by the citizens.[59]

The main argument in favour of the harmony of old and new must surely be the impressive amount of positive proof. The two most remarkable features are the parishes and the hermits and anchorites. The number of parishes and the ways they developed, remaining at the centre of the city's religious life, provide good evidence of the strength of popular religion. The remarkable community of hermits and anchorites shows the imagination of the city in its religion. In these and many other respects Norwich was a leader in Europe, not just in England. Indeed, it is the coming together of so many notable features that makes Christianity in medieval Norwich so very striking and of such absorbing interest.

One other feature demands attention: that is, the number of priests and members of religious orders in the city. It may seem a strange topic with which to conclude, since the clergy, both secular and regular, are sometimes seen as forming a discrete clerical establishment at odds with lay piety, almost oppressive of true religion. But this is largely a misconception: the clergy are better seen as an extension of lay piety than as being opposed to it. After all, priests and religious spent the first 20 or so years of their existence as lay people, before they entered upon their new ways of life. Criticisms of the laity against the clergy – including those made in Norwich – were nearly always that the latter were not priestly and religious enough, that they remained too attached to their former ways of lay life, not that they were too clerical and distant.

The most complete statistics for priests and men in religious orders in Norwich come from the bishop's visitation of the city in 1492. Eighty-nine priests were recorded as being attached to the 46 parish churches; about 27 more belonged to the colleges of secular priests or held various ecclesiastical

offices; 46 monks lived in the cathedral priory; and an average of perhaps 30 friars might be found in each of the four friaries, which were not included in the visitation. The total thus stands at almost 300 priests and male religious.[60] This means that, if a figure of about 10,000 for the total late fifteenth-century population of the city is accepted, then over 5 per cent of the male population of the city, and a much greater proportion of the adult men, were priests or members of religious orders. For other periods of time the evidence is much less complete, but it looks as though the proportion of priests and male religious to the total population of the city remained much the same, the population peaking in the early fourteenth century, falling sharply after the Black Death and recurrences of the plague, and slowly recovering from the middle of the fifteenth century.[61]

Nor was Norwich the home of an alien clerical population, in the way that Chaucer and Langland described London as a magnet attracting ambitious priests from outside the city.[62] The evidence of the birthplace of ordinands recorded in the episcopal registers indicates that Norwich was producing roughly as many secular priests as were living in the city. Added to this is the large number of young men who were mentioned in their parents' wills as being priests or members of religious orders. Between 10 and 11 per cent of all the sons mentioned were so described, and even these figures understate the true situation, since they do not include children who became priests or entered religious orders after their parents made their wills. These testators came predominantly from the upper ranks of Norwich society. That such a high proportion of their sons entered the church shows that the older and more institutional forms of religion still had considerable appeal for a class of young men that one might expect to have produced its fair share of radicals. Here too was a blending of old and new, a certain harmony between the institutional and charismatic. The proportion of sons opting for an ecclesiastical career showed no decline on the eve of the Reformation, indeed it was slightly higher between 1490 and 1532 than between 1370 and 1489. Some of these home-grown clergy, it seems, stayed in Norwich while the majority lived and ministered elsewhere.[63]

It is perhaps fitting to end on a topic – the value of the priesthood and of life in a religious order – that was as much debated in the Middle Ages as it is today. Then, as now, men and women argued over the nature of true religion. Ending with men may cause regret. On the other hand, the chapter began with the anchoress Julian of Norwich, who today is by far the best known figure, religious or otherwise, to have lived within the medieval walls. She, pre-eminently, illustrates that the religious phenomenon of medieval

Norwich was as feminine as it was masculine: a fact supported by much other evidence. It obviously cannot be *proved* that Norwich was the most religious city in medieval Europe, but hopefully it has been shown, at least, that the city was one of exceptional piety in medieval Christendom.

Chapter 8

Sources for Popular Religion in Late Medieval England

We are now in the middle of the second revolution of medieval studies. The first occurred in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, when the basic texts were edited and some general hypotheses were reached. In the second revolution, much harder and deeper questions are being asked, especially questions that are more personal to us. From being a remote and alien world – indeed the very word 'medieval' used to have a pejorative air about it – medieval civilization is coming to have a remarkable fascination for the modern mind: as witness the astonishing range of papers at this 28th International Congress on Medieval Studies at Kalazamoo. It is within this context that this brief general survey is made, regarding the sources for popular religion in late medieval England.

When we speak of the sources for popular religion, there are three senses of 'sources'. First, the people themselves as sources; secondly, the questions that historians ask of the subject; thirdly, the documents.

Before I enter into these three aspects of the topic, I would like to make an introductory point by way of comparison between England and Italy. There is no doubt that northern Italy, in the late Middle Ages, was the most advanced region in Europe in many ways, especially culturally and economically. In terms of Renaissance culture and large cities England could not compare. Nevertheless it would be wrong to see religion in late medieval England only as a pale image of what was happening in Italy or, for that matter, in France and the Low Countries.

Religion in England from 1300 to the eve of the English Reformation around 1530 (for, that is the time-span meant by 'late Middle Ages' when referring to religion in England, and that is the time-span I am assuming in this paper) was interesting and original in its own right. This is a point that

has been seen more clearly by historians recently and I hope it will appear from what I shall say.

A few other introductory points. If you want an introductory bibliographical survey, that has already been done excellently by Peter Heath;[1] and for comprehensiveness there is, of course, the *International Medieval Bibliography* from the University of Leeds in England, whose editor, Simon Forde, is the co-president of this session. I am rather attempting something at the level of ideas, even to be prophetic! – to sum up how matters lie at present and to point to likely developments in the future, as I see them. Please note, too, that I am not going to attempt a definition of 'popular religion'. It seems to me the phrase has a clear *prima facie* meaning, the religion of the people, and some further clarification should become apparent in the course of the paper. Also, coming as I do from the other side of the Atlantic, I hope you will forgive me if some of the questions I ask have, unknown to me, already been answered this side of the water. While I wish to be as comprehensive as possible, you will probably find – due entirely to my limitations – a bias towards what is being done by English historians: please be indulgent towards this weakness.

Medieval people constitute the first source of popular religion. So it is a pleasant matter of revisiting old friends and discovering some new ones. They may be divided into three groups: the great, the middling sort, and the largely anonymous masses.

Among the personalities of international interest, Julian of Norwich, the anchoress and mystic, has been the focus of great interest in recent years. Her one work, *Revelations* (or the more recently preferred *Showings*) *of Divine Love,* which survives in two versions, a short and a longer one, is now recognised widely as a spiritual classic of the highest order. No doubt there will be further studies of her work. But since no other work by her survives or is known to have been written, and so little else is known about her life, advances of a historical nature are likely to be limited or at least slow. I think the way forward may be through further understanding of the background within which this remarkable woman lived, both in England and on the Continent, including Italy of course – both the 'popular religion' background, so to speak, and the more specific context of other spiritual and mystical writers, both English and Continental. Slowly and indirectly this wider knowledge may deepen our understanding of Julian and her work. It is also true that the recent critical edition of the *Revelations* by Colledge and Walsh[2] has not met with universal acceptance, so there may be more work to be done there.

Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton and the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* are the three other great mystical writers of late medieval England. Our knowledge of the lives of Rolle and Hilton is limited, though we know more about them than about Julian of Norwich, while the author of *The Cloud* is unknown. We still await major studies of the two men and *The Cloud*, though a good deal of detailed work on particular aspects of all three of them has been done in recent years. The time may now be ripe for major studies but it is also true that, as with Julian of Norwich, much of the advance in our understanding will come from better knowledge of the background of the period, both English and Continental. Synthesis must go hand in hand with further analysis.

John Wyclif is the only other of the great personalities that I want to discuss. In his case, also, we lack a major recent study of the man and here too I think the time is now ripe. Williel Thomson has sorted out his Latin writings,[3] though there is still work to be done on possible works by him in English. Recent collections of essays edited by Anthony Kenny and by Anne Hudson and Michael Wilks give some idea of the amount of detailed work that has been done in recent years.[4] Michael Wilks, recently retired from his professorial chair at Birkbeck College, London, has promised the major study: his forthcoming article on Wyclif for the *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* augurs well for this project. There is no need to justify the importance of Wyclif's influence upon popular religion.

I might have included John Duns Scotus and William of Ockham. Their status as major figures as well as their links with England – albeit Scotus was surely a Scot! – are not in doubt. The great labours of the Franciscan Institute at St Bonaventure's University in editing the theological and philosophical works of William of Ockham are now finished, and we are halfway through the new critical edition of the works of Duns Scotus.[5] For Ockham we also have Marilyn McCord Adams's recent *magnum opus*[6] to guide us through his thought and the time may soon be ripe for a major study of Scotus. But both men were essentially intellectuals and it might be stretching matters to include them in the theme of this paper, popular religion. Though as we see more that popular religion cannot be separated from the religion of the intellectual élite – more will be said on this point later – perhaps we will come to judge that they really ought to be included. On the giants of English literature, a little more will be said later.

Margery Kempe provides a bridge from the great to the 'middling sort', not that there was anything middling or ordinary about her! She represents, at the apex, the large number of women and men who are emerging from late medieval England as religious personalities of considerable interest and originality.

Until recently she tended to be dismissed rather condescendingly as a hysterical eccentric. Well, no doubt she could be rather tiresome and wearying for many people. But as an example of the intensity of religious experience that was possible, she is of exceptional interest and almost unique anywhere in late medieval Christendom. Various scholars have been working on her.[7] Once again I think it is a question of both in-depth studies of the woman herself and a growing understanding of the background, both English and Continental, both the general and the specifically religious background, especially the other biographies or lives of late medieval saints and mystics.

Other studies, especially local studies, are revealing a multitude of other figures of comparable importance. Jonathan Hughes's work on late medieval Yorkshire and Anne Warren's book on anchorites and their patrons are but two examples, chosen almost at random, one from each side of the Atlantic.[8] Lollards are another example: they will be discussed later. It is not that we are going to arrive at many biographical studies, even on the scale of Margery Kempe or what is common for Italy at this time. That would be too much to hope for. But we are, I think, able to get insights of considerable depth into one or more facets of a large number of people. Gradually an interlocking network of pieces is built up, with each piece further illuminating the others. The whole is of great depth and complexity. It is not that a common personality is emerging; rather the diversity of individuals is one of the most striking features. It looks as though late medieval England was an unusually religious country and that the wide range of legitimate choices within orthodox religion was exploited to the full. The prominence of women is also noticeable.

The largely anonymous masses constitute the third category of people. There has been much interest in this root sense of popular religion. But the quest for the religious outlook of the 'average man (or woman) in the street' of late medieval England may be faltering, largely because of the growth of interest in the second category of persons mentioned above. That is to say, the individualism and diversity emerging within this second category makes us wary, rightly I think, of trying to construct a common mentality for the period. General statements can surely still be made usefully, but complexity and diversity of outlooks is rightly seen as the major key in the symphony. Indeed, inhabitants of late medieval England are coming to be seen as increasingly modern in their outlook, with a pluralism and sophistication that surprises us. That this was the case in various parts of western Europe has been shown by a number or recent historians, at least as regards pluralism and even atheism: Le Roy Ladurie for Montaillou, John Edwards for northern Spain, Susan Reynolds in a general article, and Carlo Ginzburg for the following

century in Italy.[9] The title of a recent collection of articles edited by L. Milis translates into English as 'The Pagan Middle Ages'.[10] All this will soon have to be taken on board in studies of England. My guess is that England will still be seen as an unusually religious country, but that this went hand in hand with a liberalism of approach and much interest in secular knowledge: nothing incompatible there, in my view. This has already been noted at the top, at Oxford University, especially in the fourteenth century: a very active theological school, from Scotus and Ockham to John Wyclif, but also a great interest in logic and the natural sciences.[11] So as the distinction between élite and popular religion becomes less sharp, perhaps it will be seen that a similar bi-focalism (or multi-focalism) existed at the more grass-roots level too.

It hardly needs saying that the second source of popular religion is generated by historians themselves, by the questions they ask. What are the questions that historians are presently asking about popular religion in late medieval England?

Probably the greatest attention is being directed towards Lollardy. In the case of John Wyclif, the father-figure of the movement, we still lack a major recent biography, as I mentioned earlier. In the case of his followers, however, Lollards, or Wycliffites as many historians now prefer to call them, we now have the major survey published by Professor Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford, 1988), which not only admirably summarises recent research but will surely act as the point of departure for future research for some years to come. One of the features of the book is to point to the diversity among Lollards. First and foremost they were individual persons, who cannot be reduced to adherents of a movement: there were many other facets of their personalities. In this sense they rightly fall under the first category of popular religion mentioned above, the people themselves. Many more of them are emerging as noteworthy people of the 'middling sort', as I tried to classify the second group. Margaret Aston's study of William White, Margery Baxter, Hawisia Mone and other Lollard leaders in early fifteenth-century East Anglia has shed light on one group of them.[12] And more is becoming known about personalities who are already established figures in Lollard history: John Purvey, Philip Repingdon, John Aston, Peter Payne, William Sawtry, Walter Brut, William Taylor, William Thorpe and others. We may not arrive at many rounded biographies, but a collection of partial sketches of considerable interest and depth is emerging and greatly illuminating the whole picture.

But accepting that Lollards must be seen first and foremost as individuals, what are the questions that historians are asking of the movement more generally? Several might be noted, I think.

In the first place there is a desire to locate Lollardy more firmly within the wider context of popular religion, especially of what might be called radical orthodoxy. There was considerable overlap between the two and they illuminate each other. That is to say, it was often only the accident of prosecution that labelled people as Lollards, and most of them shared many beliefs with other people who remained within the bounds of orthodoxy, or who happened never to fall foul of the authorities. K.B. MacFarlane made the pioneer study of this point in part 2 of his posthumously published *Lancastrian Kings and Lollard Knights* (Oxford, 1972) and since then further work has been done on the theme. In addition, there is the wish to see Lollardy from the viewpoint of Lollards rather than almost exclusively through the eyes of their prosecutors. This is difficult since most of the surviving evidence comes from the prosecution but an increasing amount of 'Lollard' evidence is coming to light. Anne Hudson and Pamela Gradon's edition of the Lollard sermon cycle, with three of the four proposed volumes now published,[13] represents the most substantial advance in this direction but there are many other examples.

Further points include the relationship between Lollardy and John Wyclif. On the whole the tendency is to reconnect the two, away from the fashion to dismiss Lollardy as a vulgarised distortion of the master's teaching. Less than thirty years ago Lollardy had been dismissed by eminent historians such as David Knowles and Owen Chadwick as 'an ill-defined . . . body of sentiment' and 'a few ignorant groups'.[14] Anne Hudson's work is again the standard bearer in revising these views. Another way in which the relative sophistication of Lollardy is being stressed is attention to the organisation of the movement. That is to say, Lollardy must be seen as part of the wider climate of belief and practice, as I have just said, but it was also a well organised sect which conducted systematic teaching and forms of worship. Recent research suggests, moreover, that Lollardy kept its university links, especially with Oxford, considerably longer than had previously been thought, at least into the second decade of the fifteenth century. There has also been renewed interest in the links between Lollardy and the English Reformation.

The most serious challenge to this upgrading of Lollardy's importance focuses on the middle years of the fifteenth century. Some scholars, notably Dr Catto, argue that the movement was virtually defunct from around 1430 to the last decade of the century, shown by the almost total absence of known works written or even copied by Lollards during this period, as well as by the apparent break in continuity in Lollard communities during it.[15] There are reasons to think, they argue, that the silences were real and not just the result of lack of surviving evidence. According to this thesis the revival in Lollardy

beginning around 1490 was really a kind of romantic revival of interest in a movement with which contact had been lost, rather like the Gothic revival in the nineteenth century: neo-Lollardy, like neo-Gothic art and architecture, if you like. But this is really a sub-question: the importance of Lollardy in the mid-fifteenth century. In other respects the trend is largely to emphasise the significance of Lollardy.

Lollardy is also being seen, of course, in the wider context of European dissent – another cult subject in these times. The recent second edition of Malcolm Lambert's *Medieval Heresy* (Oxford, 1992) provides an excellent guide here. We arrive at the paradox, if what is said in the present paper is true, that England contained one of the most alive and vigorous orthodox churches anywhere in Western Christendom in the late Middle Ages and at the same time the most sophisticated heretical movement, with the possible exception of Hussitism. If heresy and dissent are seen only in negative terms, as a denial of orthodoxy, then this paradox is hard to understand. But if they are seen in more positive terms, as an at least partly creative challenge to orthodoxy, which in its turn influenced them, then the situation is easier to understand. Another way of putting the point is to say that we must begin with the remarkable breadth and openness of religious outlooks in late medieval England, especially in the fourteenth century – a wide spectrum of individuals and opinions – rather than with wholly self-contained and mutually exclusive categories of heresy and orthodoxy. An *a priori* approach leads into intractable and often artificial difficulties, whereas a more personalist and empirical one may better hold together both unity and diversity.

Lollardy may have been the topic receiving the greatest attention, but perhaps the most recent subject for discussion has been what may be called 'orthodox or conservative reform' in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century. That is our second question. The seminal article has been Dr Catto's chapter on the religious policies of King Henry V.[16] Royal leadership of the movement continued under Henry VI, Henry VII and even Henry VIII. But the movement was much broader than royal initiatives. The educational side at the level of the universities has been well known for some time, though the second volume in *The History of the University of Oxford* and Dr Leader's volume on Cambridge,[17] especially, have cast considerable further light. Attention is now focusing on schools, notably in the work of Nicholas Orme and in Jo Ann Moran's study of the diocese of York,[18] and I think it would be right to investigate more closely the religious education in these schools, to see if or how it fitted into what I have called the orthodox or conservative reform movement. Was there anything of a conscious or organised development here?

The explosion of religious literature available following the advent of printing is common knowledge, but in this case the next step is being undertaken with vigour, namely an examination of the contents of the books printed and what this reveals about the interests and aspirations of the readers, especially of the laity. There have been many recent studies in this field. The same is true of the allied topic of religious devotions in this period, though I think more still needs to be done to understand the mentality and beliefs underlying the practice of these devotions, rather than simply looking at the content of the devotions; at least there is room for going deeper here.

Finally, religious orders. David Knowles showed long ago that there was a significant rise in the numbers of people entering religious orders during the late fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries.[19] Now attention is turning to the quality of what was happening: which orders were being favoured and what were the developments taking place within them. The Carthusians, Brigettines, Franciscan Observants and the community of Syon have all come in for examination, but now also the more traditional orders, or at least individual houses of these orders, which had been regarded as in decline or in a state of relative torpor. The Benedictine abbey of St Edmunds at Bury is one case of the latter type of house, for which a recent doctoral thesis for Oxford University by Nicholas Heale shows that there was much more vigour and development, both intellectual and in life-style, than had previously been allowed.[20] Further revisionism of Knowles's conclusions, regarding the quality of life in religious houses in late medieval England,[21] is clearly under way.

How far all the above can properly be categorised under 'orthodoxy' or 'conservative' or even «reform» must surely be open to question. Dr Catto, in the article mentioned above, argued for a conscious policy on the part of Henry V and his government, especially as a drive to regain ground lost to Lollardy. In some other matters we know that there was a conscious policy, for example in the foundation of Lincoln College, Oxford, where the fight against Lollardy was an explicit motive. It is also true that in general the fifteenth century was a more confrontational one – orthodoxy versus heresy – than the previous one; there was a greater degree of polarisation in many areas. But the conscious policy may have been largely at the official level, that of the church authorities and to some extent of the secular government. Underneath this level it may be better to see developments in a more amorphous light: a considerable degree of pluralism and creativity in all sorts of directions, certainly with connections between them but not capable of being fitted into any one overall pattern. How far there were connections with developments on the

Continent will be discussed under the fourth question; to what extent there were links with the Reformation concerns our next question.

How does the late medieval evidence help us to understand the English Reformation? That is our third question. It is of course an old topic but one that has come to the fore again in recent years. Amongst Reformation historians revisionism – I mean revision of the classic view[22] propounded in, for example, A.G. Dickens's *The English Reformation* (London, 1964, 1989²) – has been with us for some years. Now revisionism is affecting the late medieval end of the equation, as summarised in the early sections of recent books by Professor Scarisbrick, Eamonn Duffy and Christopher Haigh.[23] Examiners for the BA in History at Oxford University recently reported – tongue half in cheek – that students now seem convinced that nobody in England wanted the Reformation except Thomas Cromwell and possibly Thomas Cranmer. That is how far things have gone!

I think the revisionists are correct in arguing that religion and the Church in late medieval England were very much alive and vigorous. Local studies, especially, have been supporting this thesis. But this does not mean that nobody wanted the Reformation. Religion in late medieval England, as elsewhere in Western Christendom, was a very complex phenomenon, with many cross-currents. It was not all flowing in the same direction, as far as the Reformation is concerned, either for it or against it. I think the greatest danger in the extreme revisionist position is of a hidden confessional agenda, a supposedly Catholic one, just as there had been a Protestant one in the classic view of the Reformation as a wholly welcome and justified event. I say a 'supposedly' Catholic agenda because since the second Vatican council in the 1960s the Roman Catholic Church has officially accepted much of what the Reformation stood for, so that there is no longer any need for a kind of Counter-Reformation blanket hostility towards it. Well, I can see that I am entering perilous theological waters! But in this case I don't think the theological issues can be avoided in any discussion of the question. In fact, I think, it is already apparent that the revisionist hand has been over-played somewhat.[24] I hope the result will not be a re-polarisation of positions, but rather an appreciation of the complexity and diversity of popular religion in late medieval England: a healthy tension in the debate which is enriched, not stalled, by theological and confessional insights.

Our fourth question – how independent, or, if you like, how distinctively English, was the *Ecclesia Anglicana* in the late Middle Ages? – is also an old one with obvious confessional overtones. So far the subject has been argued out largely at the level of the institutional church. The issues debated by

Stubbs and Maitland are still, and rightly, being discussed.[25] There has also been interest in the role of the English language and in the liturgical rites of late medieval England.[26] There has been a gradual shift to the popular-religion side of the question, but there is plenty of room for further investigation into this dimension, and I think we realise that the institutional and the popular religion aspects are interconnected and cannot be separated. Another way in which the debate is broadening is the development of interest in issues beyond relations with the papacy, which had been the almost exclusive focus of concern at one time, with positions often being taken up as much on confessional as on historical grounds. In other words, there were many centres of late medieval Christendom other than the papacy: the University of Paris was the theological centre for most of the time; the Low Countries proved a fruitful area for new religious movements; northern Italy was the centre of humanism; and so on. So, in evaluating the extent to which the English church was a national church or rather formed part of Western Christendom, it is essential to assess England's relations with all these other centres and currents in late medieval Christendom and not to focus exclusively on relations with the papacy, important though that aspect was.

We must also avoid anachronistic notions of nationalism and national churches, importing into the late medieval scene factors that became relevant only really in the sixteenth or later centuries. What was the meaning of a national church in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries? That is the relevant question. Perhaps the crucial model was a corporation, as it was for the Western Church as a whole in this period: a body in which all the different parts functioned as a whole. In this model unity was compatible with much diversity, so that the English church could have its own marked characteristics while remaining an integral part of Western Christendom. We must also pay attention to what was happening in other countries and regions: the Gallican Church, the Church in Spain, the Church in the republics and city states of northern Italy. They provide useful and sometimes illuminating comparisons with what was happening in England. Though it is still true to say, I think, that national consciousness, with its concomitant effects upon the national church, was probably growing faster in England than in any other country of Europe in the late Middle Ages. We think of well-known factors such as the Hundred Years War with France, the reaction against the French domination of the papacy at Avignon, the development of the English language, as well as other less obvious ones. The English Church, as a result, is of considerable importance in the study of national churches in this period.

I said that we must remember that there were many other centres in late medieval Christendom besides the papacy. Equally it is important to remember that there were many foci of identity within England besides the national church. In other words, identification with the local parish[27] or town was probably much more important to most people than identification with the national church. As regards the diocese, I doubt whether it had much appeal at the level of popular religion: it was mainly an administrative unit. But I suspect that the region may have been much more important than has generally been allowed. England was still in many ways a federation of regions, and likewise the English Church may be seen as in many ways a federation of regional churches, each with its own characteristics:[28] the northern church with its capital at York; East Anglia with its centre of Norwich; the Midlands; the West; London and the south-east; and so on.

Popular religion was undoubtedly social and communitarian in its practices. So, investigation of how, and with what groups, English people identified themselves in their religious outlook and activities is surely a fruitful avenue of research. There must have been a vast network of interlocking foci of identification, of which the national church was but one, just as Europe itself, at the secular level, was a spider's web of overlapping jurisdictions.

The fifth and last question being asked by historians that I want to raise is, how Christian was late medieval England? Here I can only say a few words and I am largely speculating about the future. We know that, regarding Europe as a whole, the question has been a standard topic of debate for some time. I have already mentioned the recent works of Le Roy Ladurie, John Edwards, Susan Reynolds and L. Milis. They and various other writers have revealed just how large may have been some of the holes in what had once been regarded as the more or less seamless garment of medieval Christendom. Evidently there was a much greater degree of pluralism than had previously been thought. For England, however, there has been relative reluctance to ask the question. Valerie Flint's book has put the question squarely for the early medieval period.[29] Now I think it is time the question was put for late medieval England. It may be one of the most important ways in which our understanding of popular religion in this period will advance, and contrariwise I think that without it being asked our understanding of the subject will remain stalled.

What are the parameters of the question? – and I add a few thoughts of my own. Sadly, the Jews had been expelled from England in 1293, just before the beginning of our period. There were no Muslim communities, even of merchants, so far as we know. We are, therefore, speaking of an almost wholly Christian society, at least nominally so; perhaps the most extreme example

anywhere in Western Christendom. I have argued earlier that late medieval England was an unusually religious place, at least in comparison with other European countries. This is an important point: orthodox religion was evidently strong. On the other hand, in Wyclif and Lollardy England contained what was arguably the most formidable dissenting movement anywhere in late medieval Christendom; though it was, of course, a dissenting movement within the framework of Christianity.

I have also argued for a considerable measure of pluralism and openness of outlook in other areas of religion in late medieval England, especially in the fourteenth century but maybe also in the fifteenth. In all sorts of ways there was curiosity and creativity, both inside and outside orthodoxy. In answering this fifth question it will, of course, be impossible to avoid theological considerations: What beliefs and practices qualify to be called 'Christian' or 'non-Christian', how are the terms to be defined? – issues that are often more difficult to settle than they may appear to be at first sight. Other disciplines also need to be consulted: sociology, literary theory and so on. Altogether, therefore, it is a question that is hard to confront and investigate, but one that brings together many different facets of our understanding of this remarkable period of England's religious history; and shows that an inter-disciplinary approach is essential if further progress is to be made.

The third source are the documents. What are the documentary sources that are most likely to influence the future study of popular religion in late medieval England? Here too it is a question both of the old being revisited and of the new: of long-known sources being looked at again and of newly discovered types of evidence, as well as much that lies in the middle of the two.

First, some congratulations should be offered. I mentioned earlier the recent and largely happy situation regarding the works of William of Ockham, Duns Scotus and John Wyclif, those three theologians of international standing. Attention is now turning to theologians of the second rank.

The relevant chapters in volume 2 of *The History of the University of Oxford*[30] show just how many of them there were. Some of the works of some of them have already been published. The latest is Rega Wood and Gedeon Gàl's fine edition of Adam de Wodeham's lectures on the first book of Peter the Lombard's *Sentences*, which were delivered at the Franciscan friary in Norwich, the editors believe, between 1329 and 1332.[31] By turning our attention to a provincial city, away from Oxford and Cambridge, the editors have revealed the high level of theology that could exist outside the universities. Other editions will no doubt follow. My own feeling is that the two most needed

are Thomas Gascoigne's *Liber Veritatum*, of which at present we have only J.E. Thorold Rogers's selections *Loci e Libro Veritatum* (Oxford, 1881), and Thomas Netter's *Doctrinale antiquitatum fidei ecclesiae catholicae*, which was indeed a work of international influence right down to the seventeenth century but which needs a new critical edition to replace the 1757–9 Venice edition (by B. Blanciotti; reproduced photographically by Gregg Press, Farnborough 1967) in three volumes.

You may say that the above are theological texts, not sources for popular religion. But the more we see that popular religion cannot be separated from theological thought, the more necessary will these theological investigations become. The links are especially evident in the last two works mentioned above: Gascoigne's *Liber Veritatum*, which is a guide to contemporary religious thought, and Netter's *Doctrinale*, which attempts to refute the teachings of Wyclif.

In theological works, popular religion reveals both England's links with the Continent and distinctively national characteristics. The same is true for other areas of church life that would not normally be regarded as part of popular religion in the narrow sense and yet which certainly were connected with it. I think, for example, of the texts being brought to light by various scholars, notably Margaret Harvey,[32] touching on England's contribution to the Conciliar movement, that most significant of all constitutional developments in the late medieval Western Church. Other texts of an administrative or intellectual nature reveal a similar bi-focality. Certainly it is true of English literature texts, an industry in itself.

English literature texts of the late Middle Ages remind us not only of the famous and already well studied – Chaucer, Langland and others but also many lesser-known writers as well as a multitude of works by Continental authors which were translated into English. It is perhaps the second and third categories that are going to prove the most fruitful in the study of popular religion in the immediate future. The recent article by Dr Rhodes on the religious publications of Syon Abbey, which was originally given as a paper at Kalamazoo in 1991, is but the latest contribution in this line of research.[33] Lollard texts, both the newly discovered and those long known and now being studied anew, constitute an allied field. So, yes, it is important to look at the texts in their own right, not just at the people of the time and the questions that historians ask of the period; all three aspects go hand in hand and illuminate each other.

Wills are another source that has been receiving much attention in recent years. They take us to the level of popular religion in its most obvious sense. England has an exceptionally large number of surviving wills from the late fourteenth century onwards. Thanks mainly to local Records Offices, more-

over, they are well catalogued and easily accessible.[34] We must be aware of the limitations inherent in these records, especially the fact that they were drawn up by semi-professional scribes and are, therefore, to some extent stereotyped. It is also true that the overwhelming majority of them were made by the middle and upper ranks of society, very few by the poor. Nevertheless, since a large proportion of the bequests were of a religious nature, the wills provide valuable information about the religious outlook of large numbers of people. In all sorts of ways they bring alive our knowledge of popular religion and make it more personal. They are just the kind of evidence that help us to explore those two groups, 'the middling sort' and the largely anonymous masses, that I mentioned in the first part of this paper. I am not of course saying, to repeat an earlier remark, that we shall arrive at biographies of large numbers of ordinary people – or even at the level of biographical detail that is possible for northern Italy. Nevertheless wills provide us with intimate and revealing glimpses, many shafts of light that together illuminate a picture of much detail and complexity. As well as bringing alive the religious side of people, they shed light on all five questions discussed in the second part of this paper.

I have spoken about wills partly because I have some competence in this area and partly because they have been the focus of much recent study by historians. But there are many other sources, albeit quantitatively less extensive, that provide similar illumination. I think especially of records of a judicial or inquisitorial nature, including visitations of parishes. To these should be added records of a less personal nature: records of guilds and confraternities, some churchwardens' accounts in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and so on. It is a question both of looking again at the familiar and of searching out the unknown or unnoticed, and so of building up a picture that is both personalised and detailed, even though our knowledge of individual persons and particular details will remain less complete than we would wish. Local studies are surely the key. The parish, the town, or even a somewhat wider locality, have been the subjects of study for some time now. My own feeling is that it is time now to move on to the region: regional studies such as have long been fashionable in France and elsewhere on the Continent (though usually 'total' or economic and social studies, rather than specifically religious ones) but which English-speaking historians, in their modesty and caution, seem reluctant to undertake. The thesis of a federation of regional churches, mentioned earlier, may lead to, if correct, a better understanding of regional diversity at the level of popular religion.

Norman Cantor entitled his recent book *Inventing the Middle Ages* (New York, 1991). Any recovery of the Middle Ages certainly involves the interests

of historians, hence my second sense of sources, the questions that historians bring to the topic. Nevertheless it is surely wrong to see history as an arbitrary re-creation of the past in our own image and likeness. Our interests must engage with the people of the time and the records that they left – the first and third parts of this essay. This triple engagement is, I think, taking place in research into popular religion in late medieval England and I hope it will continue. We are discovering a world that is both fascinating in its own right and very relevant to our questioning today: a world that was distinctively English, an integral part of Europe, and above all rooted in human nature itself. No wonder the subject flourishes!

Chapter 9

Penances Imposed on Kentish Lollards by Archbishop Warham, 1511–12

Folios 159r–175v of the register of William Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, record his proceedings against suspected Lollards in Kent during the two years 1511 and 1512.[1] They are one of the most informative records of Lollard trials in England on the eve of the Reformation, certainly the best from Kent. I am working on an edition of the proceedings, which I hope will be published in the Kent Records series, and the contents will be discussed in the introduction to the edition.[2]

Here, however, I wish to concentrate on just one aspect of the proceedings, namely the penances imposed on those who were found guilty. This sombre subject has been chosen partly because the penances in question were unusually full and detailed, partly because the general topic of penances has been treated relatively little by historians of Lollardy and yet it is important for an understanding of the movement. The sentences were not just following a quantitative tariff, like monetary fines or jail sentences today; they were meant to fit the offences in a more qualitative way. They reveal much about the mentality of the ecclesiastical authorities and something about that of the wider population, insofar as the latter shared the attitudes of the clergy – a factor that is very difficult to gauge but certainly worthy of consideration. They illustrate, too, part of the climate of deterrence and punishment in which Lollards and potential Lollards lived, and which surely affected their behaviour, and probably their beliefs too. John Thomson made a brief and useful survey of the penances imposed throughout the period 1414 to 1520.[3] Now may be the time for a closer look at individual proceedings. What follows, therefore, is intended as a tentative exploration.

Warham's proceedings involved 53 suspects. They formed a group with many links among its members, as especially the depositions made by

witnesses at the trials make clear. Probably 27 of them, just over half the total, came from Tenterden and the neighbouring villages of Benenden, Rolvenden, Cranbrook, High Halden and Wittersham. Other clusters were eight from Maidstone and adjacent Boxley, Bearsted and East Farleigh; eight from Staplehurst; five from Ashford and adjacent Great Chart and Godmersham; four from Canterbury. They were 17 women and 36 men. About half the total belonged to families with two or more suspects, usually husband and wife but sometimes including one or, in the case of the Grebill family, two siblings; and at least some of the families were related to each other.

The ages of 15 defendants were mentioned, ranging from 20 to 74: five in their twenties, all of whom were sons or daughters of other suspects; a 33-year-old; one aged 40; seven who were between 60 and 63; one who was 74. Altogether the impression is of a high median age and a well-established Lollard community. There were numerous references in the trials to defendants who had learned their heresies ten, 20 or 30 years earlier, and beyond them to Lollards in the region, no longer living, who had instructed them.

All the defendants were lay men and women. The general impression is of a predominantly artisan group of moderate wealth. None of them appears to have belonged to the gentry class or above. The occupations of ten men were mentioned: three cutlers, probably two weavers, a tailor, a fletcher, a shoemaker, a cordwainer and a glover.[4] The only woman whose occupation was mentioned was described as a servant.[5]

The proceedings were conducted between 28 April 1511 and 28 June 1512, the large majority being concentrated in the five months between 28 April and 23 September 1511. They were held in various places in the diocese of Canterbury, and at Lambeth Palace (in the diocese of Winchester): the largest number at the Archbishop's residence at Knole near Sevenoaks, a fair number at Lambeth Palace, and the remainder variously in Canterbury Cathedral, the Archbishop's residences in Canterbury, Maidstone and Otford, the collegiate church of All Saints at Maidstone, and the parish church of Saltwood.

Robert Woodward, the commissary general of Archbishop Warham, conducted the proceedings in two cases and Cuthbert Tunstall, the future Bishop of Durham and of London, acting as the Archbishop's chancellor, in another. In all but these three cases, all of them relatively minor ones, the presiding figure and judge was the Archbishop himself. Also attesting to the importance of the trials was the prominent team of clerics assisting him, which frequently included Woodward, Tunstall and John Thornden, the

archbishop's suffragan bishop, and on occasions Bishops John Fisher of Rochester and Richard Nykke of Norwich, and the Dean of St Paul's cathedral, John Colet.

Of the 53 suspects, one was dismissed as not convicted and another was recorded as merely taking an oath to appear before the Archbishop when he was summoned, without any indication of the outcome.[6] In one other case the abjuration of the defendant was recorded, but no penance.[7] All the other 50 suspects were found guilty of at least some of the charges brought against them and the penances imposed on them were recorded; though in a few cases it is clear, or seems probable, that the record does not include all the penances imposed.

Five defendants were sentenced to the ultimate penalty of being handed over to the secular arm, in the knowledge that they would be burned to death. Regarding this terrible fate, the present proceedings add nothing new, inasmuch as it was the normal punishment for persistent or relapsed heretics. The four men, Robert Harryson of Canterbury, William Carder of Tenterden, John Browne of Ashford and Edward Walker of Maidstone, and one woman, Agnes Grebill of Tenterden, were confronted with an almost identical set of 14 charges, which focused on the following topics: the seven sacraments, images of the crucifix and of saints, pilgrimages and relics, prayers to the saints, holy water and blessed bread. All of them initially denied everything in the charges that was incriminating. The depositions against them, however, made clear that all of them had been leading Lollards in the region over a long period of time. One of them, John Browne, admitted a previous conviction for heresy before Cardinal Moreton 12 years previously. When confronted with the depositions and the deponents in person, four of the defendants either rejected outright the allegations made against them or stated that they did not wish to say anything in their defence, and the fifth, William Carder, said he was not aware of any guilt on his part but if there was then he repented of it. None of them, it seems, was willing to make a retraction that was satisfactory to the court. Warham, accordingly, pronounced John Browne a relapsed and incorrigible heretic; the other four he pronounced impenitent and incorrigible heretics and declared that they had incurred major excommunication. All were relinquished to the secular arm. The sentences are formal in their language, yet all of them, apart from the relapsed John Browne's, express forcibly the Archbishop's sadness at the outcome: 'with grief and bitterness of heart' he sentenced them after all his efforts to win their repentance had failed.[8]

The relinquishments to the secular arm were recorded also as significations of excommunication addressed by the archbishop to the crown.[9] Watching

William Carder being burnt, moreover, was a penance imposed on some other suspects, as will be mentioned shortly. It therefore seems highly likely that the five persons were indeed executed, even though no record of their fate survives.

The other 45 defendants, all of whom confessed their heresy, at least in some measure and on the basis of charges similar to those brought against the five persons who refused to abjure, received a wide range of penances short of capital punishment. Their penances will be the subject of the remainder of this paper.

First, however, a few words are in order about the context. The Archbishop, and English bishops generally, seem to have possessed remarkable freedom regarding the types of penance they imposed on convicted Lollards. As is well known, they could not of themselves order the death penalty; they could only hand over relapsed or obdurate heretics to the secular authority, for the latter to carry out the punishment. Other penalties directly involving the shedding of blood, such as mutilation, were also forbidden to clerics by canon law,[10] though not, it seems, those that involved bloodshed only indirectly, such as flogging, which was imposed at many Lollard trials. Apart from these restrictions the ecclesiastical judges seem to have possessed almost unlimited scope to choose, at least in theory. Earlier trials of Lollards had produced some parameters for penances, but they were flexible ones. There is no evidence to suggest, so far as I am aware, that the English bishops, either collectively or individually, had drawn up official guidelines in the matter. They were not bound, moreover, by the regulations of the Inquisition, since this institution did not function in England. The penances imposed by Archbishop Warham at the present trials, therefore, must be seen as largely the result of the Archbishop's own choices. A canon lawyer by training and profession,[11] he appears to have taken much care in working out the penances: indeed they are among the most complex and detailed known of in trials of Lollards.

Of Warham's involvement in other heresy trials, little is known that might provide a background to the present proceedings. John Foxe reported that in 1506, two years after he became Archbishop and during a vacancy in the see of London, he received the abjuration of John Brewster of Colchester and sentenced him to wearing a badge representing a faggot on his outer garment for the rest of his life.[12] Between the end of the present proceedings and the archbishop's death in 1532, no further prosecutions of Lollards are known to have taken place in his diocese.[13] The wider context, rather, is provided by the extensive prosecutions of Lollards in other English dioceses in the years 1510 to 1512: those of Bishops Fitzjames of London in 1510–11 and Smith of Lincoln in 1511, for both of which we are largely dependent on Foxe,[14] and that of Bishop

Blyth of Coventry and Lichfield in 1511–12, which survives as Lichfield Court Book B/C/13, still unedited and surely now deserving an editor.[15]

To return to the penances of the forty-five defendants, they are listed in the Table of Penances (see p. 100), together with the number of defendants upon whom each penance was imposed. The best way in to their examination is through those imposed on a group of ten suspects who appeared before Archbishop Warham on 2 and 5 May 1511: John Grebill senior, who was the husband of Agnes Grebill mentioned earlier, and their two sons, or 'natural sons' (*filii naturales*) of Agnes as they are described once,[16] John junior and Christopher; Joan Colyn and Robert Hilles from Tenterden; William Riche and Thomas Manning from Benenden; Agnes lve and Agnes Chetynden from Canterbury; William Olberd senior of Godmersham. Their trials came near the beginning of Warham's proceedings and were the first involving defendants who were not handed over to the secular arm as relapsed or impenitent heretics. The penances formed a basis, probably a model, for most of those that were ordered subsequently.

No depositions against these ten individuals survive: information about the proceedings against them is largely confined to statements that the defendant abjured his or her errors, the abjurations themselves and the penances imposed. Seven of them, however, had appeared as deponents in the trials of the five persons who were handed over to the secular arm, forming the key witnesses in the first three trials, those of Robert Harryson, William Carder and Agnes Grebill. In the case of Agnes Grebill there was the added poignancy that she was condemned largely on the evidence given against her by her husband and two sons. It seems likely, therefore, that some plea-bargaining went on, although nothing specific was mentioned in this regard.

They made their abjurations at various sessions on 2 and 5 May. The first to abjure, on 2 May, were the three Grebills, William Riche, William Olberd senior, Agnes Ive and Agnes Chetynden. All seven of them were given identical penances to confess to a priest, to receive the Eucharist, and to watch William Carder being burned (to death).[17] Confession and reception of the Eucharist were presumably linked to the fact that all of them admitted to having previously denied the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and four of them to having denied the value of confession to a priest. Nevertheless the use of the two sacraments as a weapon of penance in this way may seem strange, especially enforced reception of the Eucharist. Remedial medicine for the individual and for the wider community are the aspects of penance that are usually emphasised, but the above two penances remind us forcibly of a third aspect, namely that many Christians, perhaps

Table of Penances

The figures indicate the number of persons upon whom a particular penance was imposed: of the total 45 persons and, in brackets, of the ten sentenced together on 2 to 5 May 1511 and of the other 35.

33	Carrying a faggot on a public occasion (9* + 24).
31	Confinement to the parish or locality (9 + 22).
25	Informing the archbishop of persons suspected of heresy and of books belonging to them (9 + 16).
17	Wearing a badge with a faggot on it (9 + 8).
13	Surrendering heretical books (9 + 4).
12	Attending divine service in the parish church on Sundays and feast-days (9 + 3).
10	Recitation of the Lord's prayer, Hail Mary and creed (5 + 5).
9	Fasting and/or abstinence in food (2 + 7).
7	Imprisonment (1 + 6).
7	Confession to a priest (7 + 0).
7	Reception of the Eucharist (7+ 0).
7	Watching the execution of William Carder (7 + 0).
6	Restrictions in dress (1 + 5)
3	Offering a candle (0 + 3)
1	Treating his wife well (0 + 1).

*'9' here and below excludes Agnes Chetynden.

especially the ecclesiastical authorities, believed Christianity to be a system of beliefs that were self-evidently true, so that rejection of any of them implied ignorance or malice. The movement away from Christianity as a mystery to a system of intellectual propositions gathered pace throughout Western Christendom from the twelfth century onwards, and is essential to understanding the punishments imposed on religious dissenters in the late Middle Ages, including Lollards. The fourth Lateran council of 1215 had expressed the notion clearly and crudely: 'Heretics . . . have different faces indeed but their tails are tied together inasmuch as they are alike in their pride.'[18] All three aspects were implied in the gruesome penance of having to watch the execution of William Carder – a penalty that appears to be without parallel in other Lollard trials.

Having enjoined these three penances on the seven individuals, the Archbishop ordered them to appear before him at eight o'clock in the morning on the following Monday, 5 May, to receive further penances. Meanwhile, at

another session on 2 May, Thomas Mannyng and Joan Colyn made their abjurations, and Robert Hilles made his on 5 May. On 5 May, therefore, all ten of them, with the possible exception of Agnes Chetynden,[19] received either their penances in full or a second instalment of them. Appendix 4 (see pp. 109–10) gives the details. There seems to have been no discrimination favouring women, such as occurred at the 1428–31 proceedings in Norwich diocese, for example, where some women were given lighter penances than men for apparently identical offences.[20] Thus Agnes Ive and, if she should be included, Agnes Chetynden, received the same penances as the men concerned. It is not clear why Thomas Mannyng and Joan Colyn received lighter penances, though the probable reason is that they were less involved in Lollardy. This reason, youth, and the pressure he was under may explain why John Grebill junior also received lesser penances. He was only 21 years old and, according to his deposition against his mother, Agnes Grebill, he had converted to Lollardy only a year earlier, despite being instructed by his parents in Lollard beliefs since the age of 14 or 15.[21]

The most enduringly public of the penances was the wearing of a badge with a burning faggot on it, clearly visible on the outer garment, for the rest of life unless a dispensation was granted. Also very public was carrying a real faggot, with head, feet and shins bare, on three occasions: in the market-place of Canterbury on the following Saturday, at the front of the procession and during the sermon in Canterbury cathedral on the following Sunday, and at the front of the procession in their parish churches on the Sunday after that. The other penances included confinement to their parish, unless they received the Archbishop's permission to travel outside it, surrendering any heretical books they possessed; informing the Archbishop of any persons suspected of heresy and of books belonging to such suspects, attending divine service in their parish church on Sundays and feast-days, something that was of course a duty for all Christians. Finally, they were reminded of their obligation to perform all the penances under pain of being treated as relapsed heretics. Joan Colyn alone received the penance of abstinence from meat on each Wednesday of the forthcoming year.

Regarding the other 35 defendants (i.e. the 45 mentioned above, p. 99, minus the ten sentenced on 2 and 5 May), most of their penances followed in substance those of the ten individuals just mentioned, but with various additions and details that merit attention. Almost invariably several penances were imposed on a given person. The earliest three penances, however, were abandoned: nobody was ordered to confess to a priest, to receive the Eucharist or to watch the punishment of another, capital or otherwise.

Eight of them – two women and six men – were ordered to wear a badge picturing a faggot, clearly visible on their outer garment, for the rest of their lives; though in every case the possibility was mentioned of a dispensation in the future.[22]

Twenty-four of them – seven women and 17 men – were given the penance of carrying a (real) faggot on some public occasion. All of them were ordered to do this in their parish church on one, two, three or four Sundays and in some cases on various feast-days: Trinity Sunday, Corpus Christi and the Assumption of St Mary. This penance usually began with their being placed in front of the cross-bearer, at the head of the parish procession as it made its way round the outside of the church or through the cemetery; bearing their faggot on their shoulder. Thomas Churche, in a curious alternative arrangement, was 'to sit upon the cross' in the cemetery, bearing his faggot, as the procession went by; the contrasting symbolism of cross and faggot is again apparent.[23] Frequently they were told explicitly to appear with feet and shins bare, and heads uncovered in the case of men, 'in the manner of a penitent'. Once inside the church, they were usually obliged to wait, still bearing their faggot, normally standing but sitting in the case of John Baus and kneeling in the cases of Joan Dodde and Rabage Benet,[24] in some prominent position, often in the middle of the church before the door of the choir, until the end of the mass. Then, according to some instructions, they were to leave the church last, depositing their faggot in the church porch. Joan Dodde had the additional obligation of offering a penny at the high altar during the mass. Two others besides the 24, John Franke and Joan Riche, received similar penances except that they were to carry a candle instead of a faggot, which they were to offer to the priest at the offertory of the mass.[25]

In addition to the penances in parish churches, Joan Olberd and Elizabeth White were assigned similar penances in Canterbury cathedral. They were to walk in front of the procession in the cathedral on Pentecost day, lightly clad as penitents ('*induta sola camisia et uno lintheamine*'; '*induta solomodo camisia et tunica Anglice* a kyrtell') and carrying a faggot on their shoulders. They were ordered, too, to make a public appearance in Canterbury market on a Saturday, similarly clothed as penitents and carrying a faggot on their shoulders.[26] The choice of Canterbury is not surprising, since Elizabeth White came from that city and Joan Olberd from neighbouring Godmersham. The market-place of Cranbrook was assigned to five others: Thomas and Joan Harwode and their son Philip, who came from neighbouring Rolvenden; Stephen Castelyn and John Boxley, both of whom made their abjurations with the Harwodes, the former coming from neighbouring Tenterden and the latter from more distant

Boxley. All of them were ordered to present themselves at the time of the market on a specified Saturday, and once there they were to make three circuits of the market carrying a faggot on their shoulders. Thence they were to proceed to the parish church, where they were to deposit their faggot and to say, on bended knees, the Lord's prayer, the Hail Mary and the creed.[27]

Twenty-two individuals were sentenced to confinement within their locality. Sometimes the restriction followed the formula used on 5 May: they were not to move outside their parish without the permission of the archbishop of the time. More often, though, the formula was somewhat weaker: they were ordered merely to inform the archbishop if they moved. Usually the wording is somewhat imprecise, but it looks as if the prohibition normally concerned only a change of residence, though occasionally even temporary movements seem to have been forbidden.

William Baker, William Olberd junior, Robert Reignold and Thomas Felde, who were sentenced together on 19 May 1511, were ordered to surrender any heretical books that they might possess.[28] They and 12 others were enjoined to inform the archbishop without delay of any persons who were suspected of heresy or who possessed heretical books.

Thomas and Joan Harwode and their son Philip were ordered to attend divine service in their parish church on Sundays and feast-days, 'like good Christians' as they were told.[29]

Regarding abstinence from certain foods, following Joan Colyn mentioned earlier, Margaret Baker was forbidden to eat fish on Fridays for the rest of her life and Joan Bukherst to eat the same on the next five Fridays:[30] measures that would have reduced their diet on that day to a vegetarian one since meat was already forbidden by the general law of the church. All three were women but there does not appear to have been any special significance in this. Rather the penance seems to have been used as a light one, for defendants who were only marginally involved in Lollardy. In the case of Joan Bukherst it was the only penance imposed on her and the reason for it was mentioned, that she had kept her husband's opinions secret. A diet of bread and water featured in the sentences of imprisonment, which will be discussed shortly.

Various other types of penance, which did not feature at the hearings of 2–5 May 1511, were imposed. The best way to look at them is through the third instalment of penances given to John Grebill senior, on 3 September of the same year.[31] As mentioned above, John Grebill, the husband of Agnes and the father of Christopher and John junior, was among those sentenced to two separate instalments of penances on 2 and 5 May 1511. On 3 September of

that year he appeared before the Archbishop to receive a third instalment. No reason was given for these additional penances. Maybe Archbishop Warham regarded him as too dangerous to be left at large, since the earlier depositions showed that his involvement with Lollardy had been long and pronounced, or maybe he relapsed into heresy in some measure during the summer months. The archbishop sentenced him to perpetual imprisonment in the priory of Augustinian canons at Bilsington, Kent. He was forbidden to travel more than a mile outside the priory, under pain of being regarded as a relapsed heretic, and he was given 15 days to begin his sentence. His diet was to be bread and water, though another part of the sentence suggests the fasting was limited to Fridays: the Archbishop, moreover, immediately commuted this penance into one of not wearing a linen undergarment *(camisia linea)* on Wednesdays and Fridays. The archbishop also reserved to himself and his successors the right of mitigating or commuting the full sentence in other ways.

Imprisonment was the most severe punishment imposed at the trials, apart from the death penalty. John Grebil and his wife appear to have lived partly in Tenterden, partly in neighbouring Benenden, and of the six other persons who were sentenced to imprisonment, four came from Tenterden; a number that underlines again the centrality of the town in the circle of Lollards. The four from Tenterden were Stephen Castelyn, Robert Franke, William Pelland and Julian Hilles; the other two were Joan Lowes from neighbouring Cranbrook and Joan Olberd from Godmersham.[32] All of them were sentenced to perpetual imprisonment, though in each case the archbishop explicitly mentioned the possibility of the sentence being relaxed at some time in the future. The places of confinement were religious houses within the diocese except in the case of Joan Olberd, for whom a place was not specified: the priory of Augustinian canons at Leeds for Stephen Castelyn, St Augustine's abbey at Canterbury for Robert Franke, the Cistercian abbey at Boxley for William Pelland, the Benedictine nunnery of St Sepulchre in the suburbs of Canterbury for Julian Hilles, the Augustinian nunnery of St Sexburga at Minster on the Isle of Sheppey for Joan Lowes. Their dispersal to different places was presumably intended both to facilitate their return to orthodoxy and to prevent any dangerous concentration of them; though Leeds priory may seem a surprising choice, since the prior regarded his community of canons as rife with heresy, according to a deposition made during a visitation of the priory within a few weeks of Stephen Castelyn being sentenced![33] All the religious houses lay some distance from the prisoner's home town or village.

As was the case with John Grebill, the prisoners were usually given some leeway to move outside the religious house of their confinement, normally a

mile but two miles in the case of William Pelland, and a decent interval of time before they had to begin their imprisonment, between 15 days and a month. Most of them were told explicitly to expect a diet of bread and water, though as with John Grebil the intention may have been to confine the fast to Fridays.

The reasons for this severe punishment of perpetual imprisonment may sometimes be surmised. Robert Franke, Joan Lowes and William Pelland had asked if they might purge themselves of the charges brought against them but had then failed in their purgation, say the records, without giving further details. They were the only defendants known to have attempted purgation, and prison seems to have been, at least in part, the penalty for their failure. The case of Stephen Castelyn paralleled that of John Grebill. He had been sentenced to various penances after his abjuration in May 1511, and then four months later, in September 1511, for reasons that are not explained he was given the further penance of imprisonment. Julian Hilles seems to have been a similar case, though the date of her sentence to prison is uncertain. For Joan Olberd, on the other hand, the order was reversed: she received an initial sentence of imprisonment and various other penances and was told to report three weeks later for a second instalment of penances. The latter, however, are not recorded. All six individuals appear to have been closely involved in Lollardy, like John Grebill, though not more so than some others who received lighter sentences.

John Grebill's third instalment of penances included not wearing a linen undergarment on Wednesdays and Fridays. Five other individuals, all women, were sentenced to similar restrictions of dress. All of them were forbidden to wear a smock on Fridays for the rest of their life, though for some of them exception was made if the Friday coincided with a major feast.[34] There is no apparent reason why these women were singled out for this type of penance.

Recitation of the Lord's prayer, the Hail Mary and the creed in Cranbrook parish church had been imposed on the Harwodes, Stephen Castelyn and John Bampton, as mentioned earlier. Five other individuals, four women and one man, were ordered to say these prayers on various occasions.[35] Margaret Baker appears to have been given a one-off penance of saying the Lord's prayer and the Hail Mary ten times, while the other four were ordered to recite the two prayers five times each and the creed once on every Friday for the rest of their lives. In the cases of Alice Hilles and Agnes Reignold the place was not specified, but for Julian Hilles the recitation was to be made at St Sepulchre's nunnery in the suburbs of Canterbury, which was the religious house in which she was ordered, apparently later, to be imprisoned; and so for William

Pelland it was to be made in the place of his imprisonment, before the high altar of the church of Boxley abbey. Again, there is no obvious reason why the recipients were singled out for this penance.

Other penances were assigned to John Dodde. He was ordered to go to his parish church of Staplehurst on the next two Fridays, with head, feet and shins bare, as a penitent, there to offer a candle worth one penny to the image of St Mary. In addition, he was ordered to treat his wife in a kindly and decent manner ('*bene et honeste*'): no hint of a reason is given!

A few observations are in order by way of conclusion. Although the terms 'Lollard' and 'Lollardy' have been used in this paper, they do not appear in Warham's register, nor does the name of John Wycliffe. In the register reference is simply to 'heresy' or 'heretics'. Whether, therefore, the defendants are best described as Lollards, neo-Lollards, Wycliffites or heretics remains a matter of debate, and maybe the Archbishop himself was not sure how to categorise them.

Warham described the sentences of imprisonment as 'punishment or penance' (*pena sive penitencia*).[36] They, as well as the other sentences, were both ecclesiastical penances and punishments of a social nature, but the divide between the two may have been hazy. The penalties were meant to speak for themselves, inasmuch as the actions required of the penitents were full of symbolism and, for the most part, very public. 'According to the type of the offence' (*iuxta et secundum criminis qualitatem*) was how the Archbishop described the penances he imposed on Joan Olberd.[37] Why, among the variety of penalties imposed, particular ones were chosen for particular individuals may sometimes be surmised but is often not clear, as has been mentioned. Women seem to have been treated in much the same way as men.

Handing over relapsed or obdurate heretics to the secular arm, in the knowledge that they would be executed by burning, was prescribed by the law of the land, principally by the statute *De heretico comburendo* of 1401, and in this sense was outside Warham's control. In other respects the Archbishop eschewed physical violence, noticeably avoiding the punishment of flogging. Touches of mercy are to be seen within the sentences of imprisonment – the permitted mile or two outside the place of confinement and the interval of time before the sentence had to be begun – and especially in the possibility, often mentioned explicitly, of a penance being dispensed from, mitigated or commuted at some time in the future. In general, at least the intention seems to have been corrective and preventive rather than of great severity.

How the penances were carried out, or indeed whether most of them were ever performed at all fully, as well as the attitudes to them of the convicted

persons and other interested parties, are issues that remain mysterious, though it is worth noting that in the case of John Brewster of Colchester, whom Archbishop Warham had sentenced earlier to wear a badge with a faggot on it, as mentioned above, John Foxe tells us that he wore the badge for two years until the comptroller of the earl of Oxford, under whom he was working, plucked it away![38]

Penitential discipline is a significant though neglected aspect of the study of Lollardy. It contributes to an understanding of how the ecclesiastical authorities thought the movement ought to be treated and, what is of equal importance, of the environment in which Lollards, their sympathisers and other people lived. Warham's proceedings may prove to be the fullest and most sophisticated collection of penances enacted, so they are a reasonable place to begin. Other trials and relevant material need to be examined in order to fill out the picture. This brief paper, therefore, ends, hopefully and penitentially, with a plea for further study.

Appendices

For the original texts, from which the translations below have been made, see *Kent Heresy Proceedings,* (see below p. 214, note 2), pp. 6–7 (Appendix 1), p. 25 (Appendix 2), p. 36 (Appendix 3), pp. 39–40 (Appendix 4), and pp. 98–9 (Appendix 5).

1) *Sentence of Robert Harryson, 2 May 1511 (f. 172^{v})*

In the name of God, Amen. We, William by divine permission archbishop of Canterbury, primate of all England and legate of the apostolic see, are sitting in judgement, having invoked the name of Christ and having before our eyes God alone, duly and canonically proceeding in virtue of our office – after the merits of the case have been heard and understood, seen, investigated and scrutinised, and with fitting deliberation discussed and pondered, preserving in and throughout everything in the said business whatever the law requires to be observed or is called for in any way – in a matter of heresy against you, Robert Harryson: layman of our city of Canterbury, known to be placed under and subject to our jurisdiction, who are appearing in person before us in court, having been disclosed and reported to us regarding the said heresy, and after good and responsible people have proclaimed your ill repute in the said matter extensively and publicly all over our diocese of Canterbury.

On account of what has been done, deduced, proved and shown before us in this matter, we have found, by legitimate proofs cited in judicial manner in our presence, that you have held, believed, affirmed, preached and taught various errors, heresies and condemned opinions that are opposed, contrary and repugnant to divine and ecclesiastical law, against the orthodox faith as defined and observed by the universal, catholic and apostolic church, especially against the sacraments [*sic*, in the plural] of the altar or the Eucharist and other sacraments and teachings of holy mother church. Following the example of Christ, who desires not the death of a sinner but rather that he be converted and live, we have tried repeatedly to correct you and to lead you back, by lawful and canonical means, in so far as we have been able and known how, to the orthodox faith as defined and observed by the universal, catholic and apostolic church and to the unity of the same holy mother church. We have found you, however, so stiff-necked that you are unwilling either to confess your errors and heresies of your own accord and immediately, or to return to the said catholic faith and unity of holy mother church. Rather, like a son of iniquity and darkness, you have hardened your heart to such an extent that you are not willing to listen to the voice of your pastor, who with paternal affection offers you peace. Nor will you be influenced by affectionate and paternal warnings or brought back by wholesome persuasions.

We are unwilling that you, wicked as you are, should become worse and in future infect the Lord's flock with the disease of your heresy, something that we fear greatly. Acting on the advice of experts who have assisted us in this matter and with whom we have communicated, we pronounce and declare by way of sentence and definitively in this ordinance, with grief and sadness of heart, that you, the aforesaid Robert – whose faults and sins have been aggravated by your damnable obstinacy, who have been convicted of the detestable crime of heresy and refuse to return as a penitent to the unity of the church – that you have been and are, in virtue of the above things, a heretic and one who believes in, supports and gives refuge to heretics. We relinquish you henceforth to the judgement and court of the secular arm. We also pronounce, decree and declare by this ordinance that you Robert, heretic as mentioned above, have also fallen into and incurred the sentence of major excommunication by reason of the above and that you have been and are excommunicated.

Present are the reverend father lord John, bishop of Cyrene, and the venerable masters Cuthbert Tunstall, doctor of both laws, Thomas Welles, Gabriel Silvester and Clement Browne, professors of sacred theology, together with the aforesaid notaries and many others.

2) ***Relinquishing of William Carder, Agnes Grebill and Robert Harryson to the secular arm, 2 May 1511*** *(ff. 172v–173r)*

To the most excellent prince and lord, lord Henry by the grace of God most illustrious king of England and France and lord of Ireland, William, by divine permission archbishop of Canterbury, primate of all England and legate of the apostolic see, sends greetings in him by whom kings reign and princes have dominion.

We signify to your royal highness, by this present decree, that certain sons and daughters of iniquity William Carder, Agnes Grebill and Robert Harryson, on account of their various condemned and manifest errors and heresies and damnable opinions against the catholic faith and holy mother church, which they and each one of them taught and preached by various ways and means, have been legitimately and canonically convicted and judged to be heretics by us, and each one of them has been thus convicted and judged. Since, therefore, holy mother church may not do what ought to be done further in this matter, we relinquish the said heretics, and each one of them, to your royal highness and your secular arm.

Given in our manor of Knoll on 2 May in the year of the Lord 1511 and in the eighth year of our translation.

3) ***Penances imposed on 2 May 1511*** *(f. 1601)*

Thereupon the same most reverend father absolved them from the sentence of excommunication that they had incurred by reason of the aforesaid things and restored them to the sacraments of the church and communion with the faithful. Then he enjoined upon them and each one of them, as part of their penance, that first they confess to a priest and receive the Eucharist; and that they go to watch William Carder being burnt on account of his incorrigibility. And then the same reverend father fixed for them the following Monday, at eight o'clock in the morning, to receive the remainder of their penance.

4) ***Penances imposed on 5 May 1511*** *(f. 161[4])*

On the said following Monday, namely on the second day of the aforesaid month of May, in the same place as above, in the presence of the above-named witnesses, the same most reverend father, sitting judicially in court, enjoined the following penance upon Christopher Grebill, Robert

Hilles, William Riche, William Olberd senior, Agnes Ive and John Grebill senior, namely:

First, each of them will wear a representation of a burning faggot – that is, men on the upper arm, on the left sleeve of their outer garment, women on the left sleeve of their outer garment – publicly and without any concealment for their rest of their life, unless the same most reverend father or his successors dispense otherwise with them in the matter.

Next, each of them will carry a faggot of wood on their shoulder in the market-place of the city of Canterbury next Saturday, and at the front of the procession on next and the following Sunday in the cathedral church of Christ at Canterbury. They shall remain there during the sermon, with the faggot on their shoulder, until the sermon is finished. On the following Sunday each of those who have abjured in this way will carry the same bundle of wood in a similar manner at the front of the procession in their parish church. During the above, their head, feet and legs shall be bare.

Next, henceforth none of them shall dwell outside the parish in which they now live, unless they obtain explicit permission beforehand from the said most reverend father or his successors.

Next, if they have any heretical books, they will bring them to the said most reverend father without delay.

Next, if they know of now, or shall in the future, persons who are suspected of heresy or possess heretical books, they shall inform without delay the said most reverend father of their names.

Next, on Sundays and feast-days each of them shall frequent their parish church and attend divine worship, like a good Christian.

Furthermore, he warned them to perform their penance and each part of it under pain of becoming a relapsed heretic.

Then the same most reverend father enjoined upon Thomas Mannyng and John Grebill junior that on the following Sunday each of them should go before the procession in their parish church carrying a faggot of wood, and leave it there after the procession.

Then the same most reverend father enjoined upon Joan Colyn that henceforth she must not conceal anybody whom she knows to be suspected of heresy or teaching or holding heresy; that she must not move to other places, in order to remain in them, unless she first informs the same most reverend father or his successors as to where she will stay; and that she should not eat meat on Wednesdays throughout the next year.

5) ***Penances of John Grebill senior, 3 September*** *1511 (f. 168*[v]*)*

In the name of God, Amen. We, William by divine permission archbishop of Canterbury, primate of all England and legate of the apostolic see, are sitting in judgement, having before our eyes God alone, duly and canonically proceeding in virtue of our office – after the merits of the case have been heard and understood, seen, investigated and scrutinised, and with fitting deliberation discussed and pondered, preserving in and throughout everything in the said business whatever the law requires to be observed or is called for in any way – in a matter of heresy against you, John Grebill of Benenden of our diocese of Canterbury, who are known to be placed under and subject to our jurisdiction.

On account of what has been done, deduced and proven before us in the aforesaid matter, confessed by you, recognised and shown before us too, we have found, by your confession and other legitimate proofs cited in judicial manner, that you have held, believed, asserted, affirmed and taught various errors, heresies and condemned opinions that are opposed, contrary and repugnant to divine and ecclesiastical law, against the orthodox faith as defined and observed by the universal, catholic and apostolic church, that you have infected many others of Christ's faithful with the disease of heresy, by your perverse and insane teaching, that you have taught them continuously and diligently the said errors, heresies and condemned opinions against the orthodox faith and determination of the holy Roman and universal church, thereby turning them away and separating them from the unity of the catholic faith and of holy mother church, and that you have turned them away and separated them in so far as you have been able to. Now, however, relying on better advice, you wish to return to the unity of the church, as you affirm, with a pure and good heart and unfeigned faith.

Acting on the advice of experts with whom we have communicated in this matter – after you abjured all heresy according to the customary form of the church, and pledged yourself to obey the law and to abide by the church's commandments and the injunctions that we had imposed on you, or would do so, on account of the above things, and to perform faithfully the penance that we had assigned to you, or would do so, in this affair – we absolve you from the sentence of excommunication that you incurred thereby and we restore you to the church's sacraments and communion with the faithful. In the name of the Father, the Son and the holy Spirit.

In the above ways you have rashly departed from almighty God and the holy catholic church and have infected with the disease of heresy, by your

perverse and insane teaching, many innocent people and other Christians. Lest you infect the Lord's flock in the future with the contagious disease of heresy, something that we fear greatly, we pronounce and decree that, after you have first carried out the other injunctions and penances that we have already assigned judicially to you or are about to do so, you shall be confined to the priory of canons at Bilsington in our diocese of Canterbury, there to do perpetual penance. We wish, decree and order by this our definitive sentence, which we promulgate and publish in this ordinance, that your confinement shall be such that you do not move beyond one mile outside the said priory at Bilsington, and there you are to be sustained for the rest of your life on bread that mortifies and water that punishes. To us and our successors as archbishops of Canterbury is reserved the power of mitigating or otherwise commuting the above punishment or penance, if it seems right to us or our successors to do so.

Then the same most reverend father commuted the penance of the said John Grebill regarding fasting on bread and water, into not wearing a linen undergarment on Wednesdays and Fridays during his life, so that as long as the said John was alive he should not wear a linen under-garment on any Wednesday or Friday.

Chapter 10

Crying 'God for Harry! England and St George!'

Throughout the four centuries before the Reformation, England was part of Western Christendom, and this was a basic framework for the Church of England.

In 1054, less than half a century earlier, the schism between the Eastern and Western Churches began with the mutual excommunications of the bishops of Constantinople and Rome. At the time, and for long after, most people assumed the schism would soon be healed, but, sadly, it has endured to this day. Soon after the end of our period, the Reformation began, producing divisions within the Western Church itself.

By 'Europe' is meant here western and parts of central Europe. England's relations with Europe during this long time can be looked at in various ways. Two extremes, however, must be avoided.

On the one hand, it is wrong to see the English Church as simply a province of the Western Church with virtually no self-identity or autonomy or initiative of its own, as if England were merely reproducing, for the most part at a weaker level, what was going on elsewhere in Europe. This is a simplistic view, suggested by some Roman Catholic scholars of an earlier generation, mostly from continental Europe and not themselves English, which does no justice to the brilliance and creativity of the English Church in this period.

The other extreme is to suggest that the English Church was already virtually a national Church, going its own way and almost independent of the rest of Western Christendom.

Relations with the papacy

The English Church's relations with the papacy may seem the obvious place to begin a study of England's place in Western Christendom. We shall start

here, but with some hesitation. We have to be careful not to exaggerate the importance of the papacy at this time, nor to project the preoccupations of the Reformation and later periods back into the Middle Ages. Most people, for example, would probably have had little idea of the name of the pope of the time, and no 'picture' of him such as has been possible since the arrival of television and other mass media.

On the one hand, the tensions can be highlighted. Just before the beginning of the period, William the Conqueror was King, and Lanfranc was Archbishop of Canterbury. Both were devout men, who worked closely together, and while they supported many of the aims of the reforming papacy of the time, they strongly resisted those that seemed to encroach on the rights of the king in his government of the realm and of the Church.

Later, in the fourteenth century, when the papacy moved from Rome to Avignon in southern France, and when all the popes for some seventy years, 1307–1378, were Frenchmen, there was tension between England and what was seen as a 'French papacy', especially because for most of the time England was at war with France, in the Hundred Years War, and the popes were seen as favouring France in this quarrel.

In the middle of the period lived Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln: his remonstrations with Pope Innocent IV are discussed below.

On the other hand, Nicholas Breakspear of St Albans in Hertfordshire was elected pope as Hadrian IV in 1154. He was an able pope, whose reign was cut short by an early death. There seemed nothing unusual in electing an Englishman to the post, though in fact he was to be the only man from the British Isles ever to become pope.

Later, too, during the papal schism of 1378–1417 – when there were two claimants, and sometimes three, to the papacy – England was a strong supporter of the 'Roman' pope against the Francophile claimant based in Avignon. And afterwards the English government was seen as an important ally of the popes in their struggles with a succession of church councils about authority in the Church.

A wigging for Pope Innocent IV

Robert Grosseteste (c. 1170–1253) is one of the most remarkable personalities of the English Church. Theologian, scientist, linguist, a pastoral and reform-minded priest, at the advanced age of more than 60 he was elected Bishop of the vast diocese of Lincoln, and spent the remaining 18 years of his life as an energetic and outspoken pastor.

What concerns us here is the dramatic visit he paid in 1250 to Pope Innocent IV, who was then residing in Lyons in France, in order to present to him a written denunciation of what he saw as the abuses of power by papal officials and by the Pope himself, particularly their sale of church offices and the promotion of their families. Grosseteste's speech to the Pope reached a climax.

> The papal see, the throne of God, the sun of the whole world . . . which should, like the sun, give light, life, nutrition, growth, preservation and beauty to the earth, has lost its proper functions, its *rationes causales*, the reason for its existence. It has been perverted, and it has become a source of perdition and destruction. He who bears the *persona* of Christ has divested himself of this *persona* and taken that of his earthly relatives and his own flesh and blood.

He went on almost to identify the Pope with Antichrist, the 'Son of Perdition', and then outlined his own pastoral vision with a further sideswipe at the Pope and curia:

> The most divine and absolutely overriding art of saving souls must be given to those who understand the gospel of Christ as set forth in the Old and New Testaments, without the interference of those who understand only the subordinate arts of secular administration.

It is to the credit of Pope Innocent that he listened to Grosseteste, though annoyed, he does not seem to have changed his behaviour. The two men soon clashed again when the Pope appointed his own nephew to a canonry in Lincoln cathedral, an appointment that Grosseteste fiercely resisted.

Grosseteste shows the extent to which robust criticism was acceptable in that age, how concern for the papacy could be combined with outspoken remarks.

Canon law

Historians have debated how far the law of the Church of England was already in the Middle Ages independent of the canon law of the Church of Rome. Frederick Maitland and William Stubbs began the debate in the late nineteenth century. Stubbs argued for a large measure of autonomy, pointing especially to the book on canon law entitled *Provinciale,* which was written by the Englishman William Lyndwood in the fifteenth century, and which

seemed to Stubbs to prove an independent tradition of English canon law. Maitland, on the other hand, argued that *Provinciale* always pre-supposed the binding force of *Corpus Iuris Canonici,* the canon law of Western Christendom as a whole, and that English canon law was merely a set of by-laws or appendices to this basic law.

Maitland had the better of the argument, and his basic thesis about the recognition of *Corpus Iuris Canonici* in England proved to be right. On the other hand, he interpreted canon law in an overley legal or literal sense, as if it were a 'code', somewhat similar to the Napoleonic Code of a later period. Hence Stubbs's emphases on custom, and on a certain flexibility within the *Corpus*, so that it was open to a good measure of interpretation and adaptation within the English scene, were important insights, too.

The English Church was, for the most part, well able to manage its own affairs, and unwelcome interventions from outside were the exception, not the rule. This self-sufficiency in church law, as in other areas of church life, became more pronounced in the late Middle Ages, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Continental Councils

Councils provide another example of England's relations with Western Christendom. Ecumenical councils, such as Nicaea I and Chalcedon and others in the early Church, were regarded as impossible without the participation of the Eastern Church, so that 'General Councils' were the highest and most authoritative church councils in the medieval West. They were the European Parliament of the time.

Ten of them were held in various cities of Europe between 1123 and 1512–17: the five Lateran Councils in Rome, two in Lyons and one in Vienne in France, one in Constance in Germany, and one which began in Basel in Switzerland and ended in Florence in Italy.

There were representatives from the British Isles at almost all these General Councils, and – another sign of interest – some of the best contemporary accounts of their proceedings were written by English chroniclers. English bishops were particularly zealous in enforcing in their dioceses the decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, which was the most thorough-going of the ten Councils with regard to reform of the Church.

On the other hand, English bishops were ready to defend the interests of their country when the occasion demanded, as happened most notably at the Council of Constance.

'Against the malice of the French'

The Council of Constance, which met from 1414 to 1418 for the dual purpose of healing the papal schism and reforming the Church, was organised according to 'nations'.

That is to say, the bishops and other members of the Council met and voted in their national groupings, and then the Council reached its collective decision by considering the votes of the individual nations.

Controversy raged about whether England should be considered a nation. At earlier Councils, at which this 'national' arrangement had existed in embryonic form, Western Christendom was divided into four nations: French, Spanish, Italian and German. The last was a catch-all for the countries outside France, Spain and Italy, and included, besides Germany itself, the Slavic countries, Scandinavia and the British Isles.

The English delegation to the Council, which was high-powered and well organised, led by the Bishop of Salisbury and including four other bishops as well as the personal ambassadors of King Henry V, pushed hard for England to become a fifth nation, separate from Germany. The Germans proved to be England's staunchest ally, perhaps happy to shed a difficult partner!

The chief opponents of the proposal were the French, who argued that England was too small to be considered a separate nation, and ought to continue to form part of the German nation. The changing fortunes in England's favour in the Hundred Years War, however, added weight to the English case: the Battle of Agincourt was fought in 1415, towards the beginning of the Council.

The English case prevailed. Indeed, the Anglo-German alliance, now comprising two of the five nations, endured throughout the Council and proved important for its eventual outcome.

The saga revealed some unpleasant sides of nationalism and ecclesiastical politics. Henry Chichele, the Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote to the Bishop of Salisbury and his colleagues congratulating them on defending English rights 'against the malice of the French, who have always been our enemies', and urging unremitting vigilance 'lest by their wiles they regain the control over the Church which they had in times past, and cunningly rob others of their rights'.

Theology and learning

The British Isles played a full part in the development of Western theology. Anselm of Canterbury was the most brilliant mind of his age. He is often called the first 'scholastic', inasmuch as he was the first medieval theologian

to question the Christian religion systematically by reason, though he put it more gently in his famous description of theology as 'faith seeking understanding' (*fides quaerens intellectum*). He proposed a proof of the existence of God, the 'ontological argument', that still excites philosophers today.

Anselm spent the last part of his life in England, as Archbishop of Canterbury from 1093 until his death in 1109, yet he was a cosmopolitan European. He was born and brought up in Aosta in northern Italy and he spent many years as a monk at Bec in northern France: so that while he is known here as Anselm of Canterbury, in Italy he is known as Anselm of Aosta, and in France as Anselm of Bec.

John Duns Scotus (*c*. 1266–1308) and William of Ockham (*c*. 1285–1347) were also the leading thinkers of their time, and they, too, were European figures. The former, as his name indicates, was born in Scotland, possibly in the town of Duns: he became a Franciscan friar, and taught at both Oxford and Paris universities, and at Cologne in Germany. Whereas Thomas Aquinas, his brilliant predecessor, had emphasised knowledge and reason, Scorns stressed more the importance of the will and of love.

William of Ockham, from Ockham in Surrey, where his shrine exists today in the parish church, also became a Franciscan friar and taught at both Oxford and Paris. During a second spell of teaching in Oxford, he ran into trouble with the chancellor of the university on account of his teaching, and as a result he was summoned to appear before the Pope in Avignon.

He obeyed the summons, but, having spent some time in Avignon, and fearing the punishment that might befall him, he fled to Germany and spent the last 20 years of his life in Bavaria under the protection of Emperor Louis. At Oxford and Paris, Ockham wrote on philosophy and theology; in Germany, on political theory.

Ockham was a highly original thinker: his sharp mind gained the epithet 'Ockham's razor'. Analytical and critical, more positively, however, he strove to preserve the transcendence and freedom of God from any attempt to tie God down to our human categories and wishes: a Barthian before Karl Barth. He was the most influential thinker in Western Christendom, especially in university and academic circles, during the two centuries before the Reformation, more influential even that Aquinas or Scotus.

Riches of art

The cathedrals, so well kept by the Church of England today, are the architectural glories of medieval England. The thousands of medieval parish churches

that still survive are beautiful and fascinating, often exquisitely so, at a more intimate level.

At both levels, the architecture was influenced by developments on the Continent, Norman in the early period and Gothic later. Even so, the rich variety and distinctive local characteristics are obvious to any visitor. In England, particularly, there developed a national style in the later Middle Ages: English Perpendicular or Late English Gothic.

Much the same may be said of other aspects of the Church of England's artistic heritage from the Middle Ages, though this is often difficult to know for certain, because much religious art was destroyed after the Reformation.

There is the fine stained glass in York Minister, for example; or the murals in Chaldon parish church in Surrey, showing even Byzantine influences; or the Wilton diptych that portrays King Richard II before Mary, the saints and angels; or the five-panel ratable now in Norwich Cathedral, depicting Christ's Passion, death and resurrection, seemingly a mixture of English and Flemish influences; or the twelth-century ivory cross or the fourteenth- or fifteenth-century travelling-altar in gold and enamel, preserved respectively in the Cloisters Museum in New York, and in the Victoria & Albert Museum, as the Campion Hall triptych, in London.

Popular religion

The English Church was a community of remarkable energy and variety, especially in view of the much smaller population: just a tenth of what it is today, and with the large majority living in the countryside.

For many people, a primary identity in religion, as in other matters, was the locality: the village and the parish in the countryside, the parish or a street or a ward in the towns. In larger towns, such as Norwich or York, there could be as many as 50 parish churches; in London, much the largest city with perhaps 40,000 inhabitants in 1300, there were more than 100.

Guilds and confraternities, sometimes based on crafts and trades, sometimes on parish churches or religious houses, provided another identity for many people, especially in towns, providing a mixture of religious, social and economic functions and activities, including the drama of the mystery plays.

The diocese, with its bishop and cathedral (sometimes two), was another unit: 17 in England, five in Wales, separate hierarchies in Scotland and Ireland. But the diocese was largely an administrative unit. An area with which more people probably identified was the region: sometimes this coin-

cided with a diocese. In some ways England was still a federation of regions, the Church of England a federation of regional churches: the north with its capital of York, East Anglia with Norwich, the Midlands, the West Country, and the south-east with the national capital of London.

There were the liturgical rites of the regions: the Norwich rite, the Hereford rite and the expanding Sarum (or Salisbury) rite. There also seem to have been noticeable regional variations in religious temperament, especially in the later Middle Ages: a more 'high-church', almost Baroque, Christianity in East Anglia and the diocese of York; a more puritanical spirit in the south-east and the Midlands, with large Lollard communities in London, Coventry and Leicester.

At the popular level, too, it is remarkable how much Christians from the British Isles took an interest in the wider fortunes of Christianity. The crusades, however much we may now regret them as a false goal, were one aspect of this wider concern.

Pilgrimages abroad were another popular activity. There was a hostel in Rome, still surviving today as the English College, which was specifically for English pilgrims in the city. Margery Kempe, the redoubtable lady from King's Lynn in Norfolk, after she had borne 14 children, set out on a series of distant pilgrimages: to Jerusalem and Rome in 1413–15, to Santiago de Compostela in Spain in 1417–18, and to Norway, to Danzig in Prussia and back through Paris in 1434–5, when she was probably aged at least 60.

Chapter 11

The Study of English Medieval Recluses in the Twentieth Century

I am pleased and honoured to make this contribution to the *Festschrift* for Professor Deguchi, whom I have known especially from his always pleasant visits to my college in Oxford University, Campion Hall, from his kind hospitality to me during my visit to Japan in 1991, and from his welcome Christmas cards. I hope, too, that the theme of my contribution may be appropriate: Professor Deguchi's interest in the Romantic Movement of the nineteenth century is well known, and there is certainly a romantic element in the lives of medieval recluses; equally, contemplation lies at the heart of the life of a recluse, and a contemplative aspect is a notable feature of our honorand.

The modern study of hermits and anchorites in medieval England begins with the book of Rotha M. Clay, *The Hermits and Anchorites of England* (London, 1914). She described her purpose in the Introduction as, 'to give a picture of the daily life of the lonely dwellers . . . and to show something of the way in which their influence was felt'. In this she was eschewing any judgement on the miraculous or on mystical experiences. Nevertheless her approach was primarily theological and spiritual: too much influenced, her critics would suggest, by Romanticism and the Anglican High Church movement, perhaps too by the hopes of a revival of the eremitical way of life in her time. She considered that for hermits and anchorites 'their primary object in retiring into solitude was the cultivation of the soul', they served their neighbours chiefly by being 'living witnesses to the reality of the spiritual world' and by interceding for their souls. Their social and other secular functions were regarded as very secondary and yet she provided much information about them: helping those in need, counselling, teaching, some scholarship, artistic work, cultivating waste places and clearing forests, guarding roads, bridges and lighthouses; in short, 'pioneers of philanthropic works'.

Clay drew a clear distinction between hermits and anchorites. The latter, both men and women (anchors and anchoresses), were enclosed within four walls; the former, all men, could leave their cells and were thus afforded a larger measure of freedom and activity. Especially important is the book's appendix, which lists, with documentary references, all the known cells and their occupants: some 750 cells and the names of over 650 hermits and anchorites. The overwhelming majority lived between the twelfth and early sixteenth centuries: 'many men, perhaps even more women'. The book is beautifully illustrated with pictures of recluses and their cells taken from medieval manuscripts, archaeological remains and other sources. It showed that hermits and anchorites were a major and fascinating feature of the religion and life of medieval England. Much of subsequent scholarship may be seen as footnotes to her pioneering work.

Some 60 years later Henry Mayr-Harting, Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Oxford University, made a perceptive study of one twelfth-century recluse in 'Wulfric of Haselbury: Functions of a Twelfth-century Recluse' (*History*, 60 (1975), pp. 337–52). The article added various nuances to Clay's book. Mayr-Harting preferred for Wulfric the term 'recluse' rather than try to fit him neatly into the category of either hermit or anchorite. The explosion in the number of recluses in twelfth-century England, all of whom, so far as is known, were English or Anglo-Danish, was, he argued, an assertion of Anglo-Saxon spirituality and a reaction against the Norman Conquest, of a kind already familiar in the monasteries. He emphasised Wulfric's varied social and economic functions: healer, counsellor, arbitrator, even banker, a bridge between the various orders of secular and ecclesiastical society, a pacifist or at least a rare voice against the second Crusade of 1147.

According to Clay's appendix, over a quarter of all the cells were in two counties: Norfolk with 90 and Yorkshire with 100. My own work on Norwich, the capital of Norfolk and home of England's most famous anchoress, Julian, includes a study of hermits and anchorites in the city: *The Church in Late Medieval Norwich, 1370–1532*, Studies and Texts, vol. 66 (Toronto, 1984). The recluses are placed within their urban context of an apparently vigorous and flourishing religion in the city, and approaching twice as many of them were found to have lived there – between 35 and 47 in the years 1370 to 1550 – as Clay had discovered, suggesting that her figures for other places probably need to be revised upwards. The work also found in Norwich the only known groups of women in medieval England closely resembling the beguinages of continental Europe: two or three small groups – variously described as sisters or poor women, living together, dedicated to God and to chastity – were

dwelling in houses in the city in the middle of the fifteenth century: semi-recluses living in community.

For Yorkshire, the most important work is Jonathan Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries: Religion and Secular Life in Late Medieval Yorkshire* (Woodbridge, 1988). Hughes, like Mayr-Harting, preferred the term 'recluse' to the attempt to distinguish between hermits and anchorites, and he placed them at the centre of a remarkable religious, intellectual and social revival in the diocese of York between 1350 and 1450. While he saw this recluse-led renaissance – inspired particularly by Richard Rolle – as peculiarly northern, he also revealed some links with the Continent.

The only major full-length work on medieval English anchorites since Clay has been Anne K. Warren, *Anchorites and their Patrons in Medieval England* (Berkeley, CA, 1985). Warren's focus, as the title of the book indicates, is upon anchorites, not hermits, more or less following Clay's distinction between the two, and upon their patrons. She argued that they were no esoteric or marginal group, rather a central part of medieval English religion from the twelfth to early sixteenth centuries and were drawn from a wide range of social classes and backgrounds, with women predominating.

The study of recluses has interlocked with two other debates: the national character of the English Church, especially in the late Middle Ages, and the role of women. Regarding the first, some links between recluses in England and developments in continental Europe have been noted, as I have indicated, but the more significant conclusion is that the life of a recluse was peculiarly English, at least from the twelfth century onwards. That is to say, the large number and the influence, in England, of women and men leading solitary lives of this kind seems to have been without parallel – at least in proportion to the population – in any other country of Western Christendom: while conversely beguinages and other forms of semi-recluse life in community, outside the traditional religious orders, never enjoyed in England a popularity similar to that in parts of continental Europe. Already there appears to have been a marked solitary streak in the English character, in the religious temperament of the people. In Wales, Scotland and Ireland, hermits and anchorites appear to have been much less prominent, though they still await full treatment by historians.

Regarding the role of women, some of the most creative insights into the anchoresses of medieval England have resulted from feminist scholarship. The focus has been upon both their number and variety and on the most famous of them, Julian of Norwich. Many of these insights are considered in the fine work of Henrietta Leyser, *Medieval Women: A Social History of Women in England*

450–1500 (London, 1995), which devotes a chapter to anchoresses and places them within the wider context of women's religion and their secular lives.

So far this article has concentrated on the lives and activities of the recluses but recent scholarship has focused as much upon the texts written by and for them. In this area, however, I must tread with caution since I am very much an amateur. Attention has concentrated on the writings of the two most famous recluses – Richard Rolle (c. 1300–1349), who lived as a hermit in various places and wrote extensive spiritual works in both Latin and English, and Julian of Norwich – and upon the three most important rules written for recluses: *De Institutione Inclusarum*, the treatise on the anchoritic life written by Ailred of Rievaulx (1109–67) in the form of a letter to his sister; *Ancrene Wisse* (or *Ancren Riwle,* 'Guide of Anchoresses'), which was originally written in English around 1200 for a group of young women recluses by a well educated and as yet unidentified cleric; and *Speculum Inclusorum* of the fourteenth century. There has been editorial work to establish the best texts, interest in language and literary styles, especially of the works written in the vernacular, interest in the religious content and translations into modern English, with the result that the literature has reached a wide audience. A good example of this work, relating to *Ancrene Wisse* and other associated texts of the so-called 'Katherine group', is the edition by Bella Millett and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, *Medieval English Prose for Women: From the Katherine Group and Ancrene Wisse* (Oxford, 1990).

The star attraction has undoubtedly been Julian of Norwich. She is rightly regarded as one of the greatest mystical writers of all times and places and she has fitted well into various recent interests. As a woman who speaks about the motherhood of God she is very relevant to feminist interests. Her emphasis on the love of God and her favourable tone, epitomised in the words revealed to her, 'all shall be well,' harmonise with the more optimistic approach current among Christians, including the Catholic church since the second Vatican council of 1962–5, and with the hope of salvation for all people. The corpus of her writings, moreover, is of manageable size and understandable at the popular level, at least when translated into more modern English: a single work, *Revelations* (or *Showings*) *of Divine Love*, in two versions, the Long text and the Short text. As a result she has achieved widespread popularity.

Christopher Abbott, *Julian of Norwich: Autobiography and Theology* (Woodbridge, 1999), provides a good summary of recent scholarship on the remarkable anchoress. The bibliography lists 50 books and articles specifically on her and her writings, the large majority of them written since 1980: almost every aspect of her theology and spirituality seems to have been

explored. Moreover, three critical editions of her *Revelations* have appeared: *A Book of Showings to the Anchoress Julian of Norwich,* ed. Edmund Colledge and James Walsh, 2 vols. (Toronto, 1978); Julian of Norwich, *A Revelation of Love*, ed. Marion Glasscoe, revised edition (Exeter, 1993); *The Shewings of Julian of Norwich*, ed. Georgina Ronan Crampton (Kalamazoo, MI, 1993).

Abbott bases his study on the Long text, which he regards as Julian's finished work, though he makes some use of the Short text, which he considers an early draft. While the Short text survives in a single fifteenth-century manuscript, the Long text provides some insuperable problems of reconstruction, since the earliest manuscripts date from around 1650, but Abbot prefers to attempt what can be said rather than to be overwhelmed by the difficulties. Of the two main manuscripts of the Long text, he follows Glasscoe in preferring British Library Sloane 2499 to Paris Bibliothèque Nationale fonds anglais 40 – which College and Walsh had preferred – on the grounds that the former is much closer to fourteenth-century English; though sometimes the Paris MS provides valuable insights.

'Autobiography' in the subtitle is the key to Abbott's book: not an autobiography in the modern sense, nor even in the more egocentric forms of Augustine's *Confessions* or *The Book of Margery Kempe*; in her own way Julian seeks 'to reconstruct personal experience in terms of a governing theological rationale'. While Abbot emphasises Julian's self-assurance and her readiness to speak, without the authority of ecclesiastical office, he sees her as loyal to the Church rather than a crypto anti-clerical. The attractive and astonishingly modern features of Julian's spirituality are treated well: God as a playful lover (p. 18), heaven means human beings becoming themselves (p. 188, Abbott's interpretation), the motherhood of God and of Christ, how we and our deficiencies are transformed into good rather than annihilated, Julian's pastoral concern in addressing people living in the world.

Julian may be the peak of a high mountain. She and the other recluses of medieval England look set to fascinate and enrich both scholars and the wider public into the new millennium.

Chapter 12

Canon Law in England, Hermits and Anchorites, Popular Religion

Canon Law in England

Baker, J.H., *Monuments of Endlesse Labours: English Canonists and Their Work 1300–1900*, London and Rio Grande, OH, 1998

Bray, Gerald (ed.), *The Anglican Canons 1529–1947*, Woodbridge, and Rochester, NY, 1998.

Doe, Norman, Mark Hill and Robert Ombres (eds.), *English Canon Law: Essays in Honour of Bishop Eric Kemp*, Cardiff, 1998.

Ferme, Brian Edwin, *Canon Law in Late Medieval England: A Study of William Lyndwood's Provinciale with Particular Reference to Testamentary Law*, Rome, 1996.

Helmholz, R.H., *Canon Law and the Law of England*, London and Ronceverte, WV, 1987.

Helmholz, R.H., *Roman Canon Law in Reformation England*, Cambridge and New York, 1990.

Kemp, Eric Waldram, *An Introduction to Canon Law in the Church of England*, London, 1957.

Maitland, Frederick William, *Roman Canon Law in the Church of England: Six Essays*, London, 1898; New York, 1968.

Powicke, F.M. and C.R. Cheney (eds.), *Councils and Synods, with Other Documents Relating to the English Church*, vol. 2, A.D. 1205–1313, 2 parts, Oxford, 1964.

Maitland provides the starting-point for the modern study of canon law in England. The author contended, largely after a study of *Provinciale*, the work compiled by the fifteenth-century English canonist William Lyndwood, that the canon law of Rome, or of the Western Church, was binding on the

ecclesiastical courts of England in the Middle Ages. This was a refutation of the view generally held by English historians of the Protestant tradition, most notably William Stubbs, that at least by the late Middle Ages the English Church was almost independent of the Church of Rome in law, as in other matters, and that the latter law was admitted in England only if the English Church explicitly allowed it. Maitland argued that there was so little explicitly English canon law in the *Provinciale* that the assumption must be that the wider canon law of the Western Church was taken for granted as binding. His views have acquired undisputed orthodoxy until the present, though various nuances have been added.

Kemp in 1957 re-launched interest in English canon law. His book added three dimensions to Maitland. Whereas the latter had focused on statutes and laws, Kemp emphasized the study of cases and that papal decretals were 'case-studies' as much as statutes. Second, he went beyond the Middle Ages into the Reformation and the nineteenth century, showing the continuity of English canon law through all three periods. He showed that Anglican canon lawyers often cited Roman canon law as authoritative even into the nineteenth-century, and described the survival of 'Doctors Commons', a society of ecclesiastical lawyers that had been founded in the fifteenth century and continued until 1858. Third, he showed the importance of the theological dimensions of canon law.

Powicke and Cheney's superb edition of the decrees issued by English diocesan and provincial synods in the thirteenth century greatly enhanced knowledge of the situation in England during this central period in the development of canon law in Western Christendom. Almost equally informative are the editors' introductions to the individual synods. England is shown to be very much part of Western Christendom and yet an imaginative and self-confident part.

Helmholz is the leading contemporary scholar of English canon law. His great knowledge of cases and of the relationship between canon and secular law in England has focused on both the medieval and the Reformation periods. His publication of 1987 is a collection of important essays, and that of 1990 focuses on the Reformation period, drawing especially on court records and on practitioners' books. For the medieval period he has fleshed out in much detail many insights of Maitland, and for the later period he has shown the continuing and at times marked influence of canon law, including Roman canon law, in England.

Ferme has recently provided the first full-length study of William Lyndwood, the central figure in Maitland's thesis. While his basic sympathy is with Maitland, he adds important nuances. In particular, he argues that there was greater flexibility within the *Corpus Iuris Canonici* than Maitland allowed. It was not a

rigid code but rather allowed for a measure of varying interpretations and the demands of local custom and practice, and Lyndwood reflected this approach. Ferme thus believes that William Stubbs, Maitland's chief opponent, had an important insight into the inherent complexity and flexibility of medieval canon law in England, as in Western Christendom as a whole.

Baker, in another recent study, has provided the first account of what he describes as a distinct tradition and literature of English canon law from the fourteenth to the ninteenth century. The book focuses upon 14 practising and/or teaching canonists, from William Paull to Sir Robert Phillimore; the chapters first appeared in the *Ecclesiastical Law Journal*, since 1987 the leading periodical dealing with all aspects of Anglican canon law.

Doe, Hill and Ombres provide a useful conspectus of where the study of English canon law stands at the close of the twentieth century, with contributions from many of the most respected scholars in the field. While there seems little likelihood of the discipline moving into post-modernism or feminism or some other recent trends, the book nevertheless reveals the vigour of the subject and the wide range of interests, from both a chronological and a topical point of view. The classic medieval debates are balanced by essays on canon law through the Reformation period, and by others on more recent topics: 'Ecclesiology, Ecumenism and Canon Law', 'Consecration, *Ius Liturgicum* and the Canons', 'Church and State in a Changing World', 'Religious Education and Worship in State Schools' and 'Establishment in a European Context', to name some of them. The growing concern with the ecumenical and comparative dimensions of canon law is novel.

Bray's scholarly edition, with notes and introductions, includes, in his own words, 'all the canons produced by the Church of England from 1529 to 1947'. It provides an essential basis for further studies in post-Reformation canon law, just as Powicke and Cheney did for the medieval period.

Hermits and Anchorites

Clay, Rotha Mary, *The Hermits and Anchorites of England*, London, 1914; Detroit, MI, 1968

Hughes, Jonathan, *Pastors and Visionaries: Religion and Secular Life in Late Medieval Yorkshire*, Woodbridge and Wolfebero, NH, 1988.

Leyser, Henrietta, *Medieval Women: A Social History of Women in England 450–1500*, London and New York, 1995.

Mayr-Harting, Henry, 'Functions of a Twelfth-Century Recluse', *History*, 60 (1975), 337–52.

Millett, Bella and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne (eds.), *Medieval English Prose for Women: Selections from the Katherine Group and Ancrene Wisse*, Oxford and New York, 1990.

Tanner Norman P., *The Church in Late Medieval Norwich, 1370–1532*, Toronto, 1984.

Warren, Ann K., *Anchorites and Their Patrons in Medieval England*, Berkeley, CA, 1985.

The modern study of hermits and anchorites in medieval England begins with Clay's work in 1914. She described her purpose in the introduction as 'to give a picture of the daily life of the lonely dwellers . . . and to show something of the way in which their influence was felt'. In this she was eschewing any judgement on the miraculous or on mystical experiences; nevertheless her approach was primarily theological and spiritual – too much influenced, her critics would suggest, by Romanticism and the Anglican high-church movement, perhaps too by the hopes of a revival of this way of life in her time. She considered that for hermits and anchorites 'their primary object in retiring into solitude was the cultivation of the soul' and they served their neighbours chiefly by being 'living witnesses to the reality of the spiritual world' and by interceding for their souls. Their social and other secular functions were regarded as very secondary and yet she provided much information about them: helping those in need, counselling, teaching, some scholarship, artistic work, cultivating waste places and clearing forests, guarding of roads, bridges and lighthouses – in short, 'pioneers of philanthropic works'.

Clay drew a clear distinction between hermits and anchorites. The latter, both men and women (anchors and anchoresses), were enclosed within four walls, while the former, all men, could leave their cells and were thus afforded a larger measure of freedom and activity. Especially important is the appendix, with documentary references, listing all the known cells and their occupants: some 750 cells and the names of over 650 hermits and anchorites. The overwhelming majority lived between the twelfth and early sixteenth centuries: 'many men, perhaps even more women'. The book is beautifully illustrated with pictures from medieval manuscripts and other sources.

The book showed that hermits and anchorites were a major and fascinating feature of medieval English religion. Much of subsequent scholarship may be seen as footnotes to her pioneering work.

Mayr-Harting, some 60 years later, made a perceptive study of Wulfric of Haselbury and in the process added various nuances to Clay. He preferred the

term 'recluse' for Wulfric rather than trying to fit him neatly into the category of either hermit or anchorite. The explosion in the number of recluses in twelfth-century England, all of whom, so far as is known, were English or Anglo-Danish, was, he argued, an assertion of Anglo-Saxon spirituality and a reaction to the Norman Conquest, of a kind already familiar in the monasteries. He emphasized Wulfric's varied social and economic functions: healer, counsellor, arbitrator, even banker, a bridge between the various orders of secular and ecclesiastical society, a pacifist or at least a rare voice against the Second Crusade.

According to Clay's appendix, over a quarter of the cells were in two counties: Norfolk with 90 and Yorkshire with 100. Tanner's monograph on Norwich, the capital of Norfolk and home of England's most famous anchoress, Julian, contained a detailed study of hermits and anchorites there. He placed them within their urban context, of an apparently vigorous and flourishing religion in the city, and found almost twice as many of them as Clay had, suggesting that her figures elsewhere needed to be revised upwards. He also discovered in Norwich the only known groups in England closely resembling beguinages, recluses living in community, and thus pointed to continental influences. Hughes also preferred the term 'recluse' to the attempt to distinguish between hermits and anchorites and he placed them at the centre of a remarkable religious, intellectual and social revival in the diocese of York between 1350 and 1450. While he saw this recluse-led renaissance – inspired particularly by Richard Rolle – as peculiarly northern he also revealed links with the Continent.

Warren produced in 1985 the only important full-length work on medieval English anchorites since Clay. Her focus, as the title of the book indicates, is upon anchorites, not hermits – more or less following Clay's distinction between the two – and upon their patrons. She argued that they were no esoteric or marginal group, rather a central part of medieval English religion from the twelfth to early sixteenth centuries, and were drawn from a wide range of social classes and backgrounds, with women predominating. She emphasized the Englishness of the movement.

Some of the most creative insights into anchoresses in medieval England have resulted from feminist scholarship. Many of these insights are considered in LEYSER's fine work, which devotes a chapter specifically to anchoresses and elsewhere places them within the wider context of women's religion and their secular lives.

Much work has been done in the last century in editing, translating into modern English, and commenting on the writings of and for hermits and

anchorites, with the result that the literature has reached a wide audience. Millett & Wogan-Browne provide a good introduction to some of this work in their recent edition, translation and commentary on the *Ancrene Wisse* and other associated texts of the so-called 'Katherine group'. The writings of Richard Rolle and Julian of Norwich are discussed in the separate articles on them.

In Wales, Scotland, and Ireland hermits and anchorites appear to have been much less prominent in this period, and they still await full treatment by historians.

Popular Religion

Brigden, Susan, *London and the Reformation*, Oxford and New York, 1989.

Cuming, G.J. and Derek Baker (eds.), *Popular Belief and Practice: Papers Read at the Ninth Summer Meeting and the Tenth Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, Cambridge, 1972.

Duffy, Eamon, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England*, c.I400–c.1580, New Haven, CT and London, 1992.

Gilley, Sheridan and W.J. Sheils (eds.), *A History of Religion in Britain: Practice and Belief from Pre-Roman Times to the Present*, Oxford and Cambridge, MA, 1994.

Larkin, Emmet, *The Historical Dimensions of Irish Catholicism*, New York, 1976; reprinted with new introduction, Washington, DC, and Dublin, 1984.

McLeod, Hugh, *Religion and Society in England*, *1850–1914,* Basingstoke and New York, 1996.

Pantin, W.A., *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century*, Cambridge, 1955; Notre Dame, IN, 1962.

Stephens, W.R.W. and William Hunt (eds.), *A History of the English Church*, 8 vols., London and New York, 1899–1924.

The eight volumes under the general editorship of Stephens and Hunt – the fullest account of Christianity in England until the beginning of the twentieth century – provided a good insight into the *status questionis*. The writers of the individual volumes, mostly Anglican clergymen, produced primarily an institutional history of the church, but the work contains a great deal about what may be described as popular religion. Chapter 16 of volume 2, on the medieval church, turned explicitly to popular religion, rather unfavourably: 'The practical religion of the illiterate was in many respects merely a survival of the old paganism thinly disguised.' It drew a distinction

between 'the religion of the common people' and the 'philosophy of the learned'. On the whole, however, the history moves quite easily, without obvious tension or consciousness, between institutional history and popular religion and is quite appreciative of the latter.

Pantin's publication of a revised version of his Birkbeck Lectures at Cambridge University in 1948, seven years after they had taken place, shows the best of the developments that had taken place in the next half-century with respect to the late Middle Ages. He, too, managed a balance and interchange between the institutional, intellectual and popular sides of religion. He did not address the issue of popular religion directly, perhaps feeling that to treat the issue separately led to false and artificial problems. He was, nevertheless, very appreciative of the religious practices of the laity, taking them seriously in their own right and not simply as superstitious or as derivative of clerical religion. The 'rise of the devout layman' he saw as 'one of the most important phenomena of the religious history of the later Middle Ages'.

The papers edited by Cuming and Baker show, as the title of the volume indicates, that popular religion had obtained an official place in British academia by the early 1970s. The 26 scholars in question, who covered the full chronological sweep of Christian history, were mostly prominent academics from England and Scotland, and in about half the cases wrote about British topics. The approach is eclectic and there is no introduction, nor does any single paper discuss explicitly the nature of popular religion. The sociological interests of continental historians lie in the background, but their more theoretical approaches and the resulting dichotomies and oppositions between popular and official religion, between the lay majority and clerical elites, are largely lacking.

Twenty-two years later, in 1994, Gilley and Sheils collected the work of 24 British scholars, this time to produce a continuous history of religion – largely though by no means exclusively of Christianity – in England, Scotland and Wales from Roman times to the present day. In this case, too, there is no open discussion of the nature of popular religion and the phrase appears nowhere in the titles of the chapters. The omission may have been deliberate, a desire once again to avoid treating popular religion as a separate category. The emphasis, however, is very much upon the religion of the people, a 'from below' approach, and there are useful bibliographical surveys.

At about the same time Duffy was causing a sensation with his treatment of popular religion just before and in the early years of the Reformation. Bringing together the recent insights of other scholars, and producing much additional material of his own, especially from East Anglia, he argued that

popular religion – or 'traditional religion' as he usually preferred to call it – on the eve of the Reformation was very much alive and flourishing, against the earlier orthodoxy of decline and decadence. He also argued that the Reformation in its early years was not readily welcomed by the majority of people, rather it was largely imposed on them against their wishes. His book has been very influential and the ensuing debate has extended well beyond academic circles.

For the nineteenth century, McLeod has provided the best summary of the debate. The introduction gives his position: 'This book will argue that in England during the period 1850 to 1914 a relatively high degree of religious consensus existed [which] included acceptance by most of the population of Protestant Christianity.'

Much of the study of popular religion has been local history and Brigden's brilliant study of London is among the finest. The city, itself untypical as the capital and much the largest city in the country, reveals the variety of individual responses and warns against generalizations.

For Ireland, Larkin brought together three articles published previously in *The American Historical Review*. Particularly seminal is the second article, 'The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850–75', in which he argues that in this quarter-century, under the vigorous leadership of Cardinal Cullen, the devotional life of Irish Catholics was transformed from an unorganized, superstitious and home-centred religion into a church-based, Romanized and clerically dominated one, with huge and lasting consequences for both Ireland and the wider Church influenced by Irish Catholicism. His thesis has become a new orthodoxy in Irish history.

Chapter 13

Piety in the Later Middle Ages in England

The Oxford English Dictionary gives as one of its definitions of piety 'devotion to religious duties and observances; godliness, devoutness, religiousness'. The emphasis is on inner religious life rather than on the externals of ecclesiastical organization – rightly so for this chapter, partly because the whole book is a history of religion, not of ecclesiastical organization, and partly for a reason special to the years between 1350 and 1520 (the period covered in this essay). That is to say, the external structures of the medieval English Church were largely established by the thirteenth century; there were relatively few changes thereafter and it would be tedious to repeat what has already been said in earlier chapters. In the area of popular piety and devotions, on the other hand, there were important developments in the late medieval period, and these will be our principal concern.

It is important to begin with an overview of the religious outlook in late medieval England because only if we understand the overall framework and mentality of the period will the details make sense. The starting point is that England was part of Western Christendom. This fact provides the basic context. The split between the Eastern Church, centred on Constantinople, and the Western Church, centred on Rome, had become formal in 1054 with the mutual exchange of anathemas by the leaders of both churches. Thereafter the two churches went their more or less separate ways. At the end of the period, with the sixteenth-century Reformation, the Western Church itself became fragmented into Catholics and Protestants. In the meantime, and therefore throughout our period, England was an integral part of Western Christendom. It is necessary to remember this, because there has been much discussion among historians about the independence of the English Church in the late middle ages.

It is certainly true that the Church in England enjoyed a considerable measure of autonomy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as indeed did other national churches. It was to be seen in the areas of liturgy, spirituality and devotional life, intellectual matters, Church government and law, and it was accompanied by a certain distancing from the papacy. In many ways Western Christendom was a federation of national and regional churches, but this did not mean that the individual churches were cut off from each other. They were parts of a whole, semi-autonomous but sharing basic things in common and in communion with each other.

In area Western Christendom was approximately the same as Western Europe today, plus some parts of central Europe. In other respects it was very different. In population we may guess that it comprised around 60 million people shortly before the beginning of the period, with somewhat less than half that number in Eastern Christendom. The number was dramatically reduced by the Black Death of 1348–9 and its subsequent outbreaks, perhaps by as much as a third or even more, and the earlier peak had probably not been reached again by 1520. Western Christendom, moreover, occupied a small corner of the world. Today Christianity is a global religion with adherents in almost every part of the world. This state of affairs has brought a certain self-confidence, a sense that Christianity is an expanding religion. But the situation is relatively new, largely the result of the discovery of the new world in the sixteenth century and Europe's colonial expansion in the nineteenth. The late Middle Ages did not share this optimistic mood. At that time Christianity had existed for well over a millennium and yet seemed to be making little progress. Indeed, in many ways it was a shrinking religion. That is to say, Christianity, and *a fortiori* Western Christendom, was probably smaller in geographical extent than it had been 1,000 years earlier, in the last century of the Roman empire. Gains in north and central Europe had been offset by massive losses, mostly to Islam, in the Near East and North Africa. Islam, although a much younger religion than Christianity, was already more widespread. It continued to advance, except in Spain, and to threaten Christendom, culminating in the capture of Constantinople in 1453. There was also the threat from the north-east. Mongols had captured Budapest in 1242 and the memory of them was still fresh. The final defeat and extinction of Christendom must have seemed a real possibility.

There was also a sense of cultural inferiority. Four cultures or civilizations were felt to be, in various ways, superior to Christianity. The first of these was Judaism, a much older religion than Christianity, possessing in many ways a richer culture and whose people were renowned for their skills in business and

other walks of life. The second was Islam, which, as we have seen, was expanding faster and more widely than Christianity; its architects and artists were at least as skilled as Christians, as travellers to Spain and the Near East could see, and its philosophers, notably Avicenna and Averroës and other commentators on Aristotle, were the envy of Western scholars. The third was Byzantium, the heir and preserver of the ancient world, with its great city of Constantinople; and the fourth, the ancient world of Greece and Rome, long since vanished except in Byzantium, yet surviving vigorously in people's memory and still largely unsurpassed by the West in its achievements in philosophy, literature, art, government and law. In these respects too, then, our period pre-dates the intellectual self-confidence, at times arrogance, which became associated with Christianity as it developed into a dominant world religion from the sixteenth century onwards. The underlying mood was rather one of unease and defensiveness. Many of the attitudes and responses of the period, which may appear to us today as strange or unnecessarily aggressive, such as the Crusades, the obsession with heresy or the expulsion of Jews, must be seen in this context. People who are ill at ease or threatened often act in such ways.

These feelings of insecurity were compounded by the disasters and crises of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, making the late Middle Ages a period of more acute and pressing problems than the period covered by the previous chapter. The consequences of the Black Death and its recurrences have already been mentioned. There were also some unusually severe famines, and there was probably a climatic change for the worse, reflected in the fact that England stopped growing grapes for making wine in the fourteenth century. From 1337 to 1453 England and France were locked in the Hundred Years War, with its associated political insecurity and economic demands. Then there were ecclesiastical and intellectual crises. In 1305 the papacy was transferred from its traditional home in Rome to Avignon in France, where it remained until 1377. This change was especially objectionable to England, which was at war with France for the latter half of that period. It was followed by the Great Schism from 1378 to 1417, when Western Christendom was divided in its allegiance between two and later three popes, and then by the Conciliar Movement lasting until 1449, when a reunited papacy quarrelled with a succession of general councils over supremacy in the Church. Our period ends with some worldly and immoral popes such as Alexander VI and Julius II.

This institutional fragmentation was accompanied by a breakdown in the intellectual synthesis of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. That is to say,

the harmonizing of the Christian faith with philosophical reason, apparently achieved with remarkable success by Thomas Aquinas and others in the thirteenth century, was called into question and eventually shattered. Duns Scotus from Scotland and William of Ockham from Surrey, both Franciscan friars and both students and teachers at Oxford University, were important figures in this process.

There was also the re-emergence of heresy: John Wyclif and the Lollards in England and John Hus and his followers in Bohemia. Other aspects of the late medieval crisis could be mentioned: apparent stagnation in the religious orders, the obsession with death in art, and an anti-intellectualism in devotional life, to be found in Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ.* Some writers talk of almost unmitigated gloom: French historians often speak of a *conjoncture de crise* – a coming together of many elements to produce a fundamental crisis of identity. But this may be to exaggerate. Human beings are remarkably resilient and, as we shall see, there was great vigour and activity in late medieval England. Insecurity, mostly subconscious, seems to me more characteristic of the period than pessimism, but the contrast with the expansionist mood that prevailed in the sixteenth century and after is striking. This was the world in which England found itself after 1350, and it forms the essential framework for the rest of this chapter.

England was a country of somewhere around five million inhabitants in 1300, reduced to perhaps three million by the Black Death and its recurrences, and slowly rising again after about 1450. Of those people nine-tenths lived in the countryside, only one-tenth in towns; the opposite of today. We are therefore dealing with a basically agrarian society, not an urban one, and this has important implications for popular religion. Also important was the fact that Christianity was already an old religion in England by the beginning of our period. It had existed in the country since the Roman occupation and had been almost the only religion since the conversion of the Danish settlers in the tenth century; the Jews were expelled from the country in 1290. Two significant points follow from this: first, we are dealing with an inherited religious situation, with all the complexity and weight that this inevitably brings; and second, we are treating of a single-religion society, not a pluralist society like modern England, in which Christianity is only one religion among others and in which religion is merely one facet of life among many others – sport, education, politics, work. Christianity was effectively the only religion in late medieval England, and it permeated every aspect of life. Its role was more akin to that of Catholicism in Poland or northern Portugal until recently, or even to that of Islam in a modern Islamic state.

What was this Christianity like? A beginning may be made to answering this question by describing the main religious institutions and activities of the time, and of these the parish must be the starting point. In the countryside the parish would have been the religious institution with which most people came into contact most immediately. Its importance has been described in the previous chapter, and what was said there applies to our period too. Its continuing vitality is shown by the remarkable programme of rebuilding parish churches all over the country between the fourteenth and the early sixteenth century. During this period, most parish churches were extensively rebuilt on a larger and grander scale, usually in what is called the Late English Gothic or Perpendicular style. Indeed, most of what we actually see today of our medieval parish churches dates from this period. The rebuilding was of course a work of piety in itself, but it also attested to the importance of all that went on inside the church. This meant first of all the official round of services and sacraments, but also a wide range of other activities. Pious confraternities, craft guilds and chantries were often attached to particular parish churches. Hermits and anchorites, too, were often based on them. In all these ways the parish church was a major focus of the local community. It was quite a hive of activity, including sometimes secular activity, though the ecclesiastical authorities tried to restrict that. It would probably also have been a blaze of colour, especially in the late medieval period – a point worth emphasizing, because we tend to think of medieval churches as simple and bare. That austerity, however, was largely the result of the Reformation and afterwards, when so many of the statues, wall paintings and stained-glass windows were destroyed. When whitewash is removed, as is the case at Chaldon in Surrey or at South Leigh or Chalgrove in Oxfordshire, we are sometimes able to see just how much of the walls was formerly covered with religious paintings depicting biblical scenes or lives of the saints. Similarly, a reading of William Dowsing's *Journal* reveals in great detail the iconoclasm wreaked by him on English churches during the Civil War period. Even so, much remains visible to the discerning eye, such as the painted rood panels in many Norfolk churches. These works of art were not only an expression of piety and a decoration for the church, but also a means of religious education through the biblical and other scenes which they depicted. Finally, at the apex of the parochial system, there were the great cathedrals, one or occasionally two for each of the 17 dioceses into which England was divided. The cathedrals contained everything mentioned above, plus a certain amount more at the episcopal level, conducted on a grander but probably a rather less personal level than in the parish churches.

Every parish had, or ought to have had, at least one priest who had the official spiritual care of his parishioners – the 'cure of souls' as it was sometimes called. This brings us to a second major feature of the religious scenery of late medieval England: the clergy and religious orders. They too have already been discussed in earlier chapters, and what was said there mostly applies to our period also. There were no major changes in organization. England continued to be divided into the two ecclesiastical provinces of Canterbury and York, each with its own archbishop and comprising fourteen and three dioceses respectively; these dioceses in turn were sub-divided into archdeaconries, deaneries and finally some 9,000 parishes. The religious orders founded in the previous centuries continued: the absence of any new religious order might be regarded as a weakness of the period. The only significant growth point was the increase in the number of monasteries of the Carthusian order, which was generally regarded as the most austere of all the orders, from three to nine between the end of the thirteenth century and the fifteenth. As for overall numbers, it has been estimated that the number of men in religious orders in England stood at around 14,000 (in about a thousand houses) in 1300, declined by at least a third from the time of the Black Death onwards, and later grew slowly to about 10,000 in 1520. To this total should be added perhaps twice as many members of the secular clergy (called 'secular' to distinguish them from members of religious orders, who lived under a 'rule' and therefore were called 'regular' clergy): that is, perhaps an average of two priests attached to each of the 9,000 or so parishes, plus a number in ecclesiastical administration, in the universities and serving as schoolmasters, as private chaplains to families or to craft guilds and pious confraternities, a considerable number as chantry priests, a few freelance priests, and a number of clerics who were waiting to be ordained priests. According to these figures, approximately one in fifty of the male population of England, and a correspondingly higher proportion of the adult men, were clerics or members of religious orders. For women the figures were very much smaller, in contrast to recent times; the number of nuns has been estimated at about 3,000 in 1300, falling sharply after the Black Death, and later slowly rising to around 2,000 in 1520.

The clergy and religious orders were an integral part of popular religion, both as ways of life chosen by a significant proportion of the population and through the influence they exercised on the laity. We should therefore be wary of stressing an artificial contrast between clerical religion on the one hand and lay piety on the other. All clerics and religious, after all, had spent the first 15 or 20 years of their life as lay people, and most of them kept close contacts

(some would say too close) with the lay world throughout the rest of their lives. In this sense they were an expression and intensification of lay Christianity, not ranged in opposition to it. There has, however, been considerable debate among historians about whether their ways of life were in decline in our period. We have noted the decline in numbers, but there is no reason to think that it was significantly sharper, proportionally, than in the population as a whole. As for a decline in morals and discipline, visitation records reveal many faults of all kinds. This evidence cannot be ignored, but we should remember that we are dealing with a large number of frail human beings in difficult callings, so that a certain amount of failure is to be expected; it is far from clear that the faults were graver or more widespread than in either the earlier or the later periods. Anti-clericalism was certainly a significant feature in late medieval England, as can be seen from these visitation records and from the works of Chaucer and Langland, and more violently from the killings of clerics in the popular revolts of 1381 and 1450, but overall it seems to have been less intense than in most parts of the European continent. The protest tended to have as its aim the reform of the clergy and religious orders, rather than their abolition. In general there was co-operation in England at many levels between the laity and the clergy and religious, and their relationship was one more of complementarity than of opposition.

The parishes, the clergy and religious orders represented the 'old order' of Christianity in late medieval England: that is to say, the religious institutions that were already well established in the country before 1350. They continued to remain very influential and to retain vitality during the late Middle Ages. Nevertheless, the period also saw new religious developments. Some of these were wholly new in the late Middle Ages; others had existed before but flowered in this period and were specially characteristic of it. In most of them England was following developments elsewhere in Europe, emphasizing the extent to which the country was part of Western Christendom. In some cases, however, there were particularly English characteristics. Most of these new movements were focused on the laity, underlining the point that in England, as elsewhere in Europe, the late Middle Ages was especially an age of lay piety.

Perhaps the best-known of the newer institutions were craft guilds and pious confraternities. Some had existed in England well before 1300, but their golden age was the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Craft guilds were associations of the members of a particular craft or trade in a particular town. Their primary purpose was the social and economic regulation of the craft or trade, but almost all of them had a religious dimension. Pious confraternities had similar religious activities but were normally centred on a parish church

or a religious house, rather than on a craft or trade. A central feature was the annual 'day' of the guild or confraternity, usually the feast day of the saint to whom it was dedicated. The day comprised a mixture of religious and social activities: usually a Mass for all living and dead members, other religious devotions, and finally a banquet for the members. Many guilds and confraternities made provision for members in need, whether from sickness or poverty, and a few had their own hospitals. They took part in civic and religious processions, and the craft guilds were normally responsible for the mystery plays. We still have four almost complete texts of these cycles of plays – from Coventry, York, Chester and one unknown location – and we know that there were many more. Each of the cycles contained between 12 and about 50 plays giving a remarkably full representation of the stories of both the Old and the New Testament. The whole cycle was performed on one day, usually at Whitsuntide or on the feast of Corpus Christi. The plays were often performed on movable carts, so that each play would be performed several times in different parts of the town. Each craft was normally responsible for a particular play. It must have been a colourful day in the town's life, and the plays would have acted as a tourist attraction, drawing in many from the surrounding countryside. Probably some of the plays were subsequently performed in smaller towns and villages of the area, many of which, like Ashburton in Devon, had their own interludes performed by parish guilds. In these and other ways guilds and confraternities would have influenced the countryside, but they were primarily urban institutions.

Chantries were another institution particularly characteristic of the late Middle Ages. In essence they were the saying or 'chanting' of Masses and other prayers for various people, especially souls in purgatory. They were based on the belief that God allowed the benefit of Masses and prayers to be given to various people in these ways. As institutions, they could be an entire college of priests, sometimes a university college, such as All Souls College at Oxford, which was founded by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1438 for 40 priests, with the object of their praying for the souls of King Henry V and those Englishmen who had died in the wars in France, as well as of forming an academic institution. Less grandly, they might be a single priest saying a daily Mass in perpetuity (hence called a 'perpetual' chantry) for the founder of the chantry and his or her family, often in a specially constructed chapel within the parish church or cathedral, like the ornate Beaufort chapel in Warwick or the simpler Holme chapel in Holy Trinity, Goodramgate in York. Or they might be simply half a dozen Masses which a tradesman asked in his will to be said for his soul. Priests said the Masses but the laity, as founders

and benefactors of the chantries, could exercise much control in other respects, determining the number and even the times of the Masses as well as various supplementary prayers to be said at them and at other times. Chantries were thus an aspect of lay piety expressing a form of eucharistic devotion which increased greatly throughout Western Christendom at this time. In London, on the eve of the dissolution of the chantries under Henry VIII, there were 44 perpetual chantries in St Paul's Cathedral alone and a further 186 of them in the city's parish churches; and there appear to have been at least 200 chantry priests in York in the mid-fifteenth century. The institution was obviously open to abuse, as reformers were quick to point out – the unnecessary multiplication of Masses, the appearance of buying and selling Masses; but a chantry also expressed much beauty and good theology in its worship. Founded on the Eucharist, it witnessed to the centrality of the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and was normally an act of spiritual charity to the founder's friends and neighbours as well as being of benefit to him or her. Finally, chantries were a way of beautifying and diversifying the worship in cathedrals and parish churches, and the priests assigned to them often assisted with parochial duties.

Hermits and anchorites had existed in England at least since the seventh century but appear to have become significantly more numerous in the late Middle Ages. Indeed, their number appears to have been unusually large in comparison with most continental countries. Anchors and anchoresses (known collectively as anchorites) lived a solitary life in a cell (called an anchorage), which was usually attached to a parish church or a religious house, and devoted themselves principally to prayer, though they would do some work and many acted as counsellors. Hermits were also solitaires primarily devoted to a life of prayer, but they were not fixed to a particular abode, and almost all were men. Some of them performed civic tasks such as looking after a gate in the city wall or a bridge; others seem to have felt free to move from place to place. Sometimes the journey was an act of penance for others: a hermit called Richard Ferneys was bequeathed £40 in the will of a wealthy Norwich merchant in 1429, 'to make a pilgrimage for me to Rome, going round there 15 times in a great circle, and also to Jerusalem, doing in both places as a true pilgrim does'. Unfortunately we are not told whether he accepted the challenge! In large cities like London, York and Norwich there were probably half a dozen hermits and anchorites living at any given time. Altogether we know of several hundred of them between 1350 and 1520, about half of whom were women and half men. Most of them were lay people, but some were nuns, monks, friars or priests, as it were on loan from their religious

houses or parishes. The many anchoresses were an important aspect of female religion, and they partly offset the small number of women who became nuns. Indeed, the most famous of all these recluses was a woman, Julian of Norwich, the anchoress and author of the spiritual classic, *Revelations of Divine Love.* They were normally expected to take a vow to persevere in their way of life until death. It was obviously a very difficult vocation, and most individuals probably embarked on it in middle age. But a few were young: Richard Rolle, also a renowned writer of devotional works, appears to have become a hermit at the age of 18.

Hermits and anchorites represent an attempt to lead a committed Christian life outside the traditional framework of religious orders. Beguinages were another way of doing this, but in a community rather than by a solitary life. These communities of lay women (called 'beguines' after their alleged founder, Lambert le Bègue), originally living in ordinary houses rather than in convents, were very popular in the Low Countries and the Rhineland. In England, however, they appear to have been virtually non-existent; only two or three possible communities in Norwich are known to us. This absence is remarkable and suggests, when taken with the unusually large number of hermits and anchorites, that there was already a solitary and reserved element in English piety.

Pilgrimages in late medieval England have been immortalized by Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales.* They remained a popular and important devotion for most of our period, though they were probably in decline in the early sixteenth century, and the fortunes of individual shrines varied considerably. A mixture of religious devotion and a social outing, they were typical of medieval religion and of the way in which religion was interwoven with the rest of life. The journey might be to the shrine of a local saint, to one of the national shrines such as St Thomas of Canterbury or Our Lady of Walsingham, or to one of the great shrines abroad, principally Jerusalem, Rome and St James of Compostela in Spain. Margery Kempe, the eccentric but very devout wife of a (King's) Lynn merchant, travelled to all three shrines abroad as well as to others in Germany and Norway, and to many others in England, between 1413 and 1433. The registers of St Thomas's Hospice in Rome, which was a hostel for English pilgrims in the city, recorded more than 200 pilgrims a year between 1479 and 1514. Another form of holy journey, the crusade to recapture the Holy Land, on the other hand, was undoubtedly in decline. It seems to have retained some importance as an ideal, but with the fall in 1291 of Acre, the last Christian stronghold in the Holy Land, its success became increasingly unlikely. Crusades continued to be called, even into the sixteenth

century, and a few people from England participated, but they were more of a dream than a reality. The years of the capture of Jerusalem and of King Richard I were long since past. Both the need to call crusades and their failure formed part of Christendom's sense of insecurity in this period.

These were the principal religious activities and institutions of late medieval England. There were others which we would classify as educational or charitable or social, but which for medieval people included an essentially religious element. In education, Oxford and Cambridge remained the only two universities in the country, with about 1,000–1,500 students in each. They continued to be principally for the education of the clergy, although laymen were coming in increasing numbers in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. In addition, we know of several hundred schools and there were probably considerably more. In these, learning for a lay career was becoming more important, but religion remained a central element and many of the schoolboys would have gone on to become priests. For girls the possibilities were more limited. Charity towards one's neighbour was a basic religious duty, and we know of over 500 hospitals in the country. Most of them were in towns and had been founded in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when urban growth had made these institutions necessary. Medical knowledge was primitive, so that we should think of hospitals as being for the care of the sick, the elderly and the marginalized in society, rather than for the cure of illnesses in our modern sense. Finally, we turn to daily work, the family and everyday life. These too, as we have seen from the parishes, the craft guilds and other things, were influenced by Christianity at many levels, from the solemnization of marriage and the other rites of passage to the organization of holy days and other communal celebrations.

This outline of the religious institutions and activities of the time is a necessary prelude to consideration of the inner aspect of religion which is our main concern. For medieval people there was far less of a distinction between the outer and the inner aspects of religion than for us today. This was partly because people were largely unlettered and therefore did not think conceptually to anything like the same extent as we do now, and partly because their actions were much more unified and public, less compartmentalized and private, than those of people today, reflecting the fact that late medieval England was a single-religion society. Medieval people thought and expressed themselves largely by what they did, and therefore their external activities were the key to, indeed for the most part *were,* their inner piety. It is therefore important to take seriously their institutions and activities, and to realize that these for the most part summarized the piety of the age.

Only in a very secondary place was there a private and intellectual piety in our modern sense. This is not to disparage medieval religion in any way, but simply to say that it was learnt and practised in significantly different ways from today. The extent of this more intellectual piety depended much on the level of literacy. Among the clergy, at least among the minority who had studied at a university, we may assume a certain level of learning. Among the laity, literacy was undoubtedly increasing in our period, but it still pertained only to a minority. As for the books they read and used for prayer, there is the basic and sad fact that no complete Bible in an English translation was generally available. The only one, the 'Wycliffite' Bible, was banned by the ecclesiastical authorities because of its associations with John Wyclif. It is true that the Bible was present in many ways: there was the Latin Vulgate version; many books contained extracts in English from the Bible; reference was made to it in most other religious works; and its message was communicated through the liturgy, paintings and stained-glass windows in churches, the mystery plays, and many other ways. So it would be wrong to think of late medieval Christianity as non-biblical. Nevertheless, the absence of an approved English translation of the Bible had a major and detrimental influence on English piety. The most popular books were missals, breviaries containing the Divine Office, and other prayer books. These could be used for a combination of vocal and meditative prayer as well as for following the liturgical services. Lives of saints were also popular, as were works of mystical writers; we know that such books were often read aloud to a group of people. Here we may note that England produced four of the most important mystical writers of the period: Richard Rolle and Julian of Norwich have already been mentioned, and to these we must add Walter Hilton and the unknown author of *The Cloud of Unknowing.* There was also the world of university learning. How far the universities influenced popular piety is much debated. Indeed, a common criticism of the time was that university theology was too abstract and academic, insufficiently in contact with everyday religion; there was a certain split between faith and reason, as mentioned earlier, and an element of anti-intellectualism in religion, though this should not be exaggerated.

So far England has been considered in a rather uniform way, but it is important to remember the differences within the country. Those between town and countryside have already been mentioned. There were also regional differences, though these are more difficult to define. That is to say, England was in many ways still a federation of regions, each with its own characteristics, and this was apparent in religious matters. There were the regional liturgical rites of Salisbury, York, Hereford, Norwich and Lincoln, though by our period

the first-named (normally called the 'Sarum' rite, after the Latin name of the town) was becoming predominant over the whole country. The various cycles of mystery plays were centred on different regions. Each region had its own provincial capital, which acted as a religious metropolis for the area: York for the north, Norwich for East Anglia, London for the south-east, and so on. And each region seems to have had characteristic elements in its piety: a type of High Church, almost baroque, religion in East Anglia and parts of the north, typified by Norwich and York; a more reserved, Puritan religion in the south-east and the Midlands, illustrated by the Lollard centres in London, Coventry and Leicester. Within a region there would be marked differences between one village and another, depending on the interests and abilities of the parishioners and the parish priest, and on other factors. Finally, there were the perennial differences between human beings – of age, temperament, condition of life and personal choice.

These personal differences merit further attention. The wide range of religious institutions and activities provided much for most tastes and temperaments: there were some things for more active and exuberant characters, others for more contemplative characters and a strong place for feminine features. People responded in a correspondingly wide variety of ways to these opportunities. Nobody could engage in everything, nor was he or she expected to. There was a certain minimum – mainly parochial duties – to which all were expected to conform, but beyond that there was much freedom of choice. At one end of the spectrum came Margery Kempe, who engaged with amazing energy in almost every aspect of the religion of her day: distant pilgrimages, frequent attendance at sermons and religious services, wide knowledge of religious books (by having them read to her), a vow of celibacy, taken together with her husband, but only after rearing a family of 14 children; yet even she was accused of heresy, partly because she was considered to be too actively engaged. Others engaged deeply but in a more restricted range of things, such as the hermit Richard Rolle or the anchoress Julian of Norwich. Yet others were deeply committed to certain things but were critical of others, such as John Wyclif or William of Ockham. There is not much evidence of outright rejection of Christianity, but it is likely that there was some, and clearly people would avoid leaving around evidence of views for which they might be prosecuted; certainly witchcraft and occult practices continued to exist, and the mystical elements of traditional religion were sometimes erroneously invested with magical connotations. The sheer range and intensity of religious activities – all for a population of at most about five million – show this to have been a remarkably religious period. None the less, this activity must be seen in terms of people:

piety overall means in actuality many very different and complex individuals, who cannot be simplified into an average man or woman in the street.

Any account of late medieval piety would be incomplete without some further mention of John Wyclif, who was probably the most influential person produced by the English Church during the late Middle Ages and who, with his followers, produced the only indigenous heretical movement to be prosecuted by the authorities. Wyclif was born around 1330, probably in Yorkshire. He studied at the University of Oxford, was ordained a priest, and spent almost all the remainder of his life as a teacher at that university, retiring in 1381 to the rectory of Lutterworth in Leicestershire, where he died three years later. He was the leading English philosopher of his time, but he is known to us chiefly because of his breach with the Church. This began with his attacks on various abuses in the Church, such as excessive clerical wealth and the holding of political power by bishops and priests, but he went on to attack a number of doctrines, notably regarding the Eucharist and other sacraments and the authority of the Church. It was his doctrinal attacks that resulted in his official condemnation, though this was muted until after his death. He emphasized the importance of the Bible and encouraged an English translation of it, though it is now thought unlikely that he took a direct hand in the version that was later produced. A group of followers gathered round him, subsequently called Lollards as a term of abuse (the word was apparently derived from the Dutch *lollen,* 'to mumble', and meant a vagabond or religious eccentric). At first they were mostly Oxford dons, but even in his lifetime he had a wider influence. Subsequently the movement spread to most parts of England and to almost all ranks of society, but degrees of support varied greatly and it always remained a minority position. Lollardy got caught up in an unsuccessful revolt led by Sir John Oldcastle in 1414, and thereafter the movement lost direct influence, though there is some evidence of a limited revival from about 1490 onwards.

Wyclif and the Lollards showed both the strengths and the weaknesses of the Church of their day. The fact that the English Church was hesitant to condemn him shows that there was more tolerance, and a wider range of acceptable opinions within the framework of orthodoxy, than we might have expected. Indeed, when William Sawtry became the first Lollard martyr in 1401, he was the first English man or woman to be put to death for heresy since 1216 – a remarkable gap and one of which England may be proud, inasmuch as it stands in contrast to almost every other European country of the time and provides a medieval ancestry for its much later and just reputation for religious toleration. But Wyclif and many Lollards went too far,

becoming strident and extreme in their attacks, and unfortunately the Church authorities reacted too far in the other direction. Over a hundred Lollards were burnt in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and religious opinion became somewhat polarized between supporters and opponents of Wyclif. This led to a certain stagnation in religious life, with healthy reforms and new movements not being sufficiently encouraged or even tolerated by the ecclesiastical authorities; much of the range and variety noted above derived from local or individual initiatives rather than from officially organized movements for reform. Wyclif was not the direct cause of the Reformation in England, but he played an indirect role. Relatively few were willing to accept his extreme views, but the whole climate of opinion was influenced by what he had said; in this way he prepared the ground and is rightly called the 'morning star' of the English Reformation.

To attempt to conclude this chapter is difficult. Piety in late medieval England was a varied and complex phenomenon and we have been dealing with a long period of time. I hope that at least I have shown something of its variety and complexity, and demonstrated that any attempt to simplify matters would be to trivialize the people of the time. I would like to close by indicating some recent trends in research and in debates among historians.

Two of the oldest debates have been about the independence of the English Church and whether the alleged decadence of the late medieval period caused and justified the Reformation. Sometimes these debates have been rather *parti pris*, with both Protestant and Roman Catholic historians having certain axes to grind. Recent historians, however, have widened both debates. In the first case, they have emphasized that there were many other points of reference and loyalty for English people besides the papacy, such as Western Christendom as a whole, the region, town or countryside, and the parish, so that too much concentration on relations with the papacy distorts the true situation. In the second case, they have shown that there was remarkable vitality within popular religion, even if there were areas of decadence within the institutional Church, so that England's religion in the sixteenth century, both Reformation and Counter-Reformation, must be seen as springing out of late medieval religion as much as in reaction against it. Certainly most historians would now agree with William Pantin's judgement on fourteenth-century England and extend it to the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries: 'With all the faults and scandals of the times, and there were many, it was at the same time a profoundly religious period.' Indeed, most historians would argue that the Church was in much better shape in England than in most other countries of late medieval Europe. Cardinal Wolsey, for example, with his immorality and

glaring abuses, was exceptional in England, whereas he would have been quite a common figure in France, Germany or Italy at the time.

Another recent trend among historians has been to move away from the study of the institutional Church and towards the study of popular religion, called 'traditional religion' by its recent and distinguished historian, Eamon Duffy. It is an attempt to investigate 'inner' rather than 'outer' religion, and is usually accompanied by a 'from below' approach to Church history; that is to say, a method which begins at the grass-roots level of ordinary Christians and what religion meant to them, as distinct from an earlier convention of beginning with the institutional Church of bishops and ecclesiastical authorities, and then more or less trying to deduce from this the religion of the faithful. This chapter reflects that trend, but two caveats must be stressed, both of which have already been mentioned. In both cases the distinction must not be drawn too sharply, as if the two aspects were in opposition to each other: that is to say, for mostly unlettered people, such as in late medieval England, piety chiefly consists of their external religious activities, not something beyond or different from them; and the older and more clerical religion was for the most part complementary, not in opposition, to the newer and more lay-oriented religion of the period.

Late medieval England, which still stands about us in its splendid legacy of great churches and cathedrals, remains in part *a terra incognita* to the modern mind. To recapture the spirit of that rich and varied world, with its many mansions of the spirit and its heights of intellectual, literary, mystical and artistic achievement, is a challenge to our sensibilities, but no one contemplating the spiritual and material remains of the period can doubt the value of the exercise.

Further reading

The best general surveys are: W.A. Pantin, *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1955); J.C. Dickinson, *The Later Middle Ages, An Ecclesiastical History of England,* vol. 2 (London, 1979); C. Harper-Bill, *The Pre-Reformation Church in England, 1400–1530* (London, 1989); and, most recently, Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400 to 1580* (New Haven, CT, 1992). For an in-depth study of a particular place see N.P. Tanner, *The Church in Late Medieval Norwich 1370–1532* (Toronto, 1984). There is an excellent collection of documents in modern English, together with an introduction, in *English Historical Documents,* vol. 4, *1327–1485,* ed. A. Myers (London, 1969), pp. 589–922. There are useful articles on individual persons and subjects in L. Stephens and

S. Lee (eds.), *Dictionary of National Biography,* 63 vols. (London, 1885–1900; new edn. in preparation), *New Catholic Encylopedia,* 15 vols. (New York, 1967) and F.L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone (eds), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church,* 2nd edn (London, 1974; 3rd edn. forthcoming). England will be seen in its wider context in a general survey of late medieval Christendom, the best being H. Jedin (ed.), *History of the Church,* vol. 4 (London, 1980).

On parishes, the clergy and religious orders, see A.H. Thompson, *The English Clergy and their Organisation in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1947), D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England,* 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1948–59), vols. 2 and 3, which is a classic work, and P. Heath, *The English Parish Clergy on the Eve of the Reformation* (London, 1969).

On craft guilds and pious confraternities see T. Smith (ed.), *English Guilds,* Early English Text Society, vol. 40 (London, 1870) and H.F. Westlake*, The Parish Guilds of Medieval England* (London, 1919). On the mystery plays see H. Craig, *English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1955). The texts of the plays are found in various editions. On chantries see K. L. Wood-Legh, *Perpetual Chantries in Britain* (Cambridge, 1965) and A. Kreider, *English Chantries: The Road to Dissolution* (Cambridge, MA, 1979). On hermits and anchorites see R. Clay, *The Hermits and Anchorites of England* (London, 1914) and A. Warren, *Anchorites and their Patrons in Medieval England* (Berkeley, CA, 1985). On pilgrimages see R.C. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims: Popular Beliefs in Medieval England* (London, 1977).

On prayer and mystical writers see D. Knowles, *The English Mystical Tradition* (London, 1962). The writings of Richard Rolle, Julian of Norwich and Walter Hilton, and the anonymous *The Cloud of Unknowing* are available in various editions. On education see J.I. Catto and T. Evans (eds), *The History of the University of Oxford,* vol. 2: *Late Medieval Oxford* (Oxford, 1992), N. Orme, *English Schools in the Middle Ages* (London, 1973) and J. Coleman, *Medieval Readers and Writers, 1350–1400* (New York, 1981).

On John Wyclif and the Lollards see K.B. McFarlane, *John Wycliffe and the Beginnings of English Nonconformity* (London, 1952), A. Kenny, *Wyclif* (Oxford, 1985) and A. Hudson, *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford, 1988).

The period was largely before biographies in the modern sense, but two works stand out: *The Book of Margery Kempe,* which is available in several editions, and *The Paston Letters,* which have been edited by J. Gairdner (London, 1904) and by N. Davis (Oxford, 1971–). The *Dictionary of National Biography* (see above) is the essential secondary work of this kind.

For an excellent survey of recent literature, see P. Heath, 'Between Reform and Reformation: The English Church in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History,* 41 (1990), 647–78.

Chapter 14

Private Life and the Middle Ages

The publication of volume 3, *Passions of the Renaissance*, brings us past the half-way mark in the English translation of the monumental survey of private life in Europe from the Roman Empire to the present time, *Histoire de la Vie Privée.*[1] This third volume, as well as coming chronologically in the middle, is the hinge of what is perhaps the central theme of the whole work, namely the increasing privacy and individualism in domestic life after the end of the Middle Ages. The point is shown by the title and contents of the volume's long central section (pp. 161–396) which is entitled 'Forms of Privatisation' and which outlines the growing privacy in domestic life from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

A change of momentous importance

In tracing this process of privatisation the authors have, I think, touched upon a change of momentous importance in European history. Of equal significance, however, is the their apparent assumption that this process has been all for the good, as if increasing privacy reflects a better and higher standard of living. As the publisher's blurb confidently asserts: 'This third volume . . . celebrates the emergence of individualism and the manifestations of a burgeoning self-consciousness.' But this assumption is far from certain, and it is the purpose of this article to challenge it in various ways. To do so I shall not be concentrating on the Renaissance but on the Middle Ages, which is the period covered by the preceding volume 2, *Revelations of the Medieval World.* For this was the last time in European history when domestic life was radically public, and this openness provides many lessons which we would do well to heed in our modern world. This article, therefore, is not meant to be a straight review of *Revelations* but rather some thoughts which have been with me for some years now, during my meanderings as a medieval historian, and which crystallised when I read the five volumes of the *Histoire.*

I would like to begin by saying a few introductory words about Christian life in the Middle Ages. Every period in the history of Christianity has experienced not only particular difficulties but also its own special opportunities for Christian living. One great advantage of the Middle Ages, that long period of approximately 1,000 years from the collapse of the Roman Empire in the fifth century to the eve of the Reformation in the early sixteenth century, which amounts to just over half of the entire history of Christianity, was the result of its being a time – at least after the initial conversion of the barbarian invaders to Christianity – when almost everybody in western Europe was at least nominally a Christian. Despite all the problems inherent in such a situation, and they were many, it resulted in a Christian society of amazing intensity and completeness. Christianity could almost be taken for granted, and this psychological security about religious beliefs provided a foundation upon which a remarkable degree of experimentation in Christian living was possible.

The situation has never been paralleled before or since. During the first four centuries of Christianity, Christians formed a minority group within the Roman Empire; even after the conversion of the emperor Constantine in the early fourth century, and the gradual establishment of Christianity as the official religion of the Empire, Christianity probably remained the religion of a minority within the Empire, and certainly other important religions continued to exist. After the Middle Ages, from the time of the Reformation onwards, western Europe became fragmented into different Christian traditions, and in recent years Christianity has returned to its original position in Europe as a minority religion within a pluralist society.

Freedom to experiment

In that long period in the middle, western Europe was united in its religious convictions to a remarkable extent. This fundamental unity should not be underestimated, despite all the valuable work that medieval historians have done in recent years to reveal diversity and variety within the medieval world. Indeed, much of this diversity and richness sprang out of the unity; it was made possible by a psychological security about religious beliefs. In the periods before and since there was remarkably wide, perhaps even wider, experimentation in Christian living, but not, I think, in such depth. In the earlier and later periods Christians were confronted with non-Christian religion or other Christian denominations. This meant that they were constantly having to compare their behaviour with outside standards. As a result there was a self-consciousness about Christian behaviour, almost a rule-book

mentality, which was not present to anything like the same extent in the Middle Ages. This self-consciousness may have produced a wide range of Christian ways of life, but in a sense it cramped growth in depth, precisely because people were constantly having to look over their shoulders, so to speak, to check on their behaviour. In the Middle Ages it was the security about basic religious convictions which provided a spontaneity and freedom to experiment in depth in Christian living, precisely because there was not a continual need to measure behaviour and experiments in lifestyle against what potentially hostile outsiders might be saying. We can see this in microcosm in a very religious family: there, a spontaneity, freedom, balance and intensity of religious practice is possible, which is far more difficult for individuals to achieve who live in a family which is not united in its religion.

Good living

The ways of experimentation in Christian living in the Middle Ages which have caught the popular imagination – and the attention of historians – have been predominantly in what may be called the professional areas of religious life: monasticism, the friars, nuns, priest-scholars, hermits, anchorites, mysticism and so on. The fascinating thing about *Revelations* is that it tells us about how Christians lived their ordinary lives, experimentation in daily life if you like, how most Christians spent most of their time. For this reason the book is so relevant today. For, although we cannot become part of that society, we can learn from it. We can see how people in a uniquely Christian society coped with daily life. We can see how Christians, spontaneously and with a freedom which is only possible in a society which is secure about its basic religious convictions, sorted out the problems of everyday living. It is not a rule-book mentality, which is inevitably the case for Christians today, living as we do in a pluralist society which presents us with a bewildering range of conflicting claims and suggestions. Rather it is experimentation springing out of a relatively tranquil and remarkably deep inner Christian life; it is authentically Christian in that special sense, which has never again been repeated for western Europe as a whole. It is morality in the best sense, namely 'good living', rather than the careful weighing-up of diverse ethical principles.

The public nature of private life

As I said at the beginning, for me the most striking point is the public nature, in the Middle Ages, of what we now call private life. It can almost be said

that what we today take for granted to be a private matter, medieval people took for granted to be of public concern. For them the starting point of life was community, and within that they carved out areas of privacy; we start from our individualism and then try to build up a community. The difference of approach is great. It helps to explain why we find creating a community so difficult whereas medieval people took it for granted.

This publicity revealed itself most basically in the extent to which marriage and the family were the concern of the whole community, indeed belonged to the community. Marriages and the resultant families were important to the whole community: they were radically functional. Thus in a stable community it mattered intensely who your neighbours were, with whom you might well have to live for the rest of your life. Likewise, children were a priceless commodity in farming and artisan communities: they could indeed mean the difference between survival and death for the group. In these ways, and many others, people were the property of each other to an extent that is inconceivable today.

1 am not, of course, advocating a restoration of 'arranged marriages' (arranged by the child's parents) or any other artificial return in family life to former times. We must live in the, world in which we find ourselves. Nevertheless we are well advised at least to be aware of the dangers of extreme individualism and isolation to which modern family practice can lead. An extreme emphasis on individual choice in marriage, with little reference to the extended family and the wider community, can remove those supports in the community which medieval society so happily provided and without which family life can become almost impossible. Similarly an excessive stress on love and personal fulfilment in marriage, without a balancing emphasis on functions in society and on children, can lead to quite unreal expectations and then breakdown when these hopes are not realised. Today's valuable emphasis on human ideals needs to be complemented by a down-to-earth common-sense about marriage, which medieval people were forced to confront but which people today can evade – though at their peril.

Communal sleeping

Let us look at some more detailed areas of this publicity in domestic life in the Middle Ages. There was the much greater degree of communal sleeping. It is impossible to be precise about the extent of this practice and it appears that customs varied from region to region as well as with time. Nevertheless it seems clear that not only sleeping together in the same room, but also

sharing a common bed, was quite normal in many areas and for long periods of time during the Middle Ages. There were exceptions: clergy and religious had their own beds, though religious would normally sleep together in a common dormitory; and the wealthier ranks of society often had separate beds, especially in the later Middle Ages. But for the large majority of the population, the sharing of beds by various members of the family, even one bed for the whole family or household, was evidently common. Even outside the family home, in inns and hospitals, or as apprentices or scholars at university, sharing a bed was quite accepted. Many people, perhaps most, slept undressed. The psychological import of this difference is hard to exaggerate. It obviously meant a far greater experience of the physical nature and needs of others, in short a much greater awareness and familiarity with the bodily aspects of life; but also a much greater psychological awareness of the whole human person, since the whole psyche is expressed in rest and sleep.

In later centuries this physical proximity became interpreted almost wholly in terms of temptations to sexual immorality. Hence the drive for individual beds (except for spouses), preferably in single rooms, at least as the norm, from the time of the sixteenth-century Reformation and Counter-Reformation, and especially from the nineteenth century onwards. But perhaps the earlier practice was better and healthier. Certainly medieval people took it for granted and had few qualms about it. It was a normal practice of a Christian society for many centuries, and therefore it must be regarded as being at least within the bounds of Christian morality.

Advantages of familiarity

Perhaps we see the advantages most clearly through the opposite difficulties of isolation. Anyone who has attended or taught in a boarding school will know that adolescents, when they come to the age of having their own room and are offered the choice between a single or a double room, will often prefer the latter. They will probably express their choice in terms of their liking the company of someone else. But that may well be only half the truth. Living alone too much can bring insecurity and anxiety regarding both ourselves and others, about who we are and what we and others are like. This in turn can lead to serious problems of depression and introversion in adulthood as this insecurity increases. Medieval people had many problems but rarely, I think, basic crises of identity. For the most part they knew who they and others were. Part of this security came, I suspect, from living in such close proximity with others during the one-third of life which is spent in bed.

This publicity was taken for granted by medieval people in many other areas of life which are regarded today as private. Caring for health, washing, taking baths, indeed almost all domestic life, normally took place in the principal room of the house, which often meant the single room that constituted home for so many people. The balance between familiarity and privacy is obviously a delicate one. However, we should not assume too readily that the move towards privacy and isolation, which greater wealth and advances in building techniques can bring, is necessarily a healthy development from a psychological standpoint. Learning about the human condition through greater familiarity with others may well be the better course.

Of equal importance, we should not be aiming to lead the developing Third World into the isolation and privacy of the West. That would be a false ideal. 'Happy are the poor!' (Luke 6, 20): what seems to us Westerns to be the unfortunate result of poverty may in fact be the wiser and more truly human way of living – as well as the only lifestyle which the earth's resources can sustain for the majority of the population.

Perhaps most striking to modern ideas was the publicity of the marriage night itself. The celebrations continued after the religious ceremony and the wedding feast with the installation of the married couple in their marriage bed by their close friends and relatives. 'Newlyweds climbed into bed before the eyes of family and friends' (p. 589) and the entourage often kept vigil outside the room for part of the night. Some may decry this custom as an outrageous intrusion into a pre-eminently private occasion. But perhaps we will be closer to the truth in seeing it rather as intense concern for the welfare of young couples – including their physical, sexual and psychological well-being – stemming from a more realistic and relaxed attitude towards sex; altogether a more incarnational approach, perhaps?

A middle ground

In all the above ways medieval society provided legitimate outlets for sexual interests which the subsequent move towards privacy has closed off. In the modern world the dividing line between where sex begins and ends has become too sharp. Either an action is sexual or it is not; there is not much grey but legitimate area in between. This means that many sexual desires are unable to find legitimate outlets, and then break forth into strident and violent perversions: gross pornography, rape, paederasty and so on. One of the great strengths of medieval society was that it recognised a middle ground, which provided a much wider range of legitimate outlets for sexual desires

and interests and which thereby rendered the resort to more extreme forms of perversion much less inevitable.

This last point is particularly relevant to the area of pain and punishment, which is the last issue on which I would like to touch. The link between pain and punishment on the one hand and sexual drives on the other is indisputable, however complex this relationship may be. It is also obvious that corporal punishment was an accepted and prominent fact of life in the medieval world, something which virtually everybody experienced. Moreover such punishment was not just a matter of justice but was also accepted as a legitimate outlet for human emotions in this area. Thus corporal punishment was virtually always carried out in public. Sometimes its sexual function was more or less openly admitted, as in the case of the semi-ritual flogging of adolescents and young men, or in the painting of various martyrdom scenes, for example the ever popular martyrdom of the ex-soldier St Sebastian, who was usually depicted as a handsome youth, lightly clad and tied to a stake, being shot to death by archers – religious and sexual motivation being curiously intertwined!

In this article I have been treading on areas which are both very sensitive and about which I am far from expert. We have, however, much to learn from medieval society and we would be foolish to dismiss it as primitive and barbarian. Its practices, so different from what we take for granted today, contain many profound insights which we ignore at our peril. This is particularly true for Christians today, since these practices were the moral choices of probably the most Christian society that has ever existed.

Chapter 15

Medieval Christendom and the Restoration of a Christian Society

The theme of this conference is evangelisation. In the minds of many people, I suspect, the best and surest way of evangelising Europe in our time is through the restoration of a Christian society. Only thus will the faith be firmly rooted and cemented into the realities of life, only thus will it be given adequate support to survive in an otherwise hostile environment. The argument is not often stated openly but I believe it influences much recent thinking on the re-evangelisation of Europe. Equally important, though likewise not often admitted openly, is the idea that medieval Christendom is the archetypal Christian society and therefore our model for today. After all, was not the Middle Ages the 'age of faith' *par excellence*, the time when the whole of Europe was united not only in its belief but also in a common view of society?

Is this line of thinking a ghost to be exorcised or a welcome plan of action? As one committed to the proclamation of the gospel and an historian of the Church specialising in the Middle Ages, I would like to offer you some considerations, of a mainly historical nature, both on the general theme of Europe's Christian roots and more specifically about medieval Christendom.

It is worth remembering, at the outset, that the arguments about a restoration of medieval Christendom are not new. They first came to the fore in the Romantic revival of the nineteenth century, which saw in the Middle Ages a 'golden age' that, if revived, might act as an antidote to the pernicious pluralist and industrial society then engulfing Europe. Some recent scholars have even claimed that 'The Middle Ages' as we know it was *invented* in this period, along with tartans and Christmas trees and many other things that we think of as traditional but which are in fact largely nineteenth-century creations. The arguments continued to hold sway among many Catholic intellectuals in the inter-war years: Maritain and Gilson in France, Chesterton,

Belloc and Gill in England, to mention but a few. So modern proponents are in worthy company.

The whole of life

An attractive point about the proposal is that it takes seriously the social dimension of religion. Christianity is not to be confined to the sacristy, but must involve the whole of life. Hence the interest in medieval Christendom, such a fully integrated Christian society. Let me also say that I warmly support the interest in the Middle Ages: it has much to teach us. My only concern is that, as I shall argue later, it was in fact much more complex than, and rather different from, the view of it propounded by many modern 'restorationists' (as I shall now call them, for convenience).

So let me come to some of my worries. The first is a general and hermeneutical one: the past cannot be resuscitated. This may be unfair as an implied criticism of restorationists, since many of them would say they seek to learn from medieval Christendom, not to reproduce it. But there is a danger, I think, of sliding from the former to the latter position. The web of history is so complex and interrelated that attempts to recreate elements of the past must reckon with the fact that in the meantime the whole framework of those pieces has changed. Otherwise only fossils will emerge, not living realities. We see this problem constantly in attempts to revive aspects of the pre-Vatican II church.

Furthermore, we should approach our European and Christian past, and the Middle Ages in particular, with some humility. We are rightly proud of many achievements, but triumphalism will destroy its charms, certainly in the eyes of others. This humility needs to be observed in several respects.

There is the simple fact that many of Europe's most important roots are non-Christian. The inheritance of the classical world of Greece and Rome is a clear example. In philosophy, law, government, art and language, Europe depends as much on these ancient and largely pre-Christian civilisations, perhaps more so, as on Christianity. Edward Gibbon may have been unfair in blaming Christianity for the fall of the ancient world, but there must be equal revulsion when Christians claim that European civilisation is their creation, their preserve. Judaism is another case in point. Medieval civilisation was rooted through and through in the Old Testament and we should not ignore the more immediate contributions of medieval Jews; Islam, too. Much of Greek philosophy was transmitted to the medieval West through Arab writers, notably Avicenna and Averroes, and in architecture and style of life there was a considerable debt to the Islamic world. Indeed Europe was

impoverished whenever *convivencia* with Jews or Muslims was terminated. Our debts to the early Celtic peoples and other pre-historic societies are gradually being uncovered by historians.

Non-European tap-roots

It is also salutary to remember that in early Christianity many tap-roots were non-European. For long the contributions of Africa and Asia were more significant than Europe's. We think of the great theologians of Alexandria and Carthage and Augustine of Hippo: the eremitical and monastic life originated in Egypt and the next phase of development occurred in Asia Minor: all the first seven ecumenical councils, from Nicaea I in 325 to Nicaea II in 787, took place in the East. The West was relatively slow in getting in on the act.

In all sorts of ways the cradle of European civilisation was the Mediterranean world, with its intellectual, religious, ethnic and other forms of diversity. Certainly medieval (Western) Christendom is explicable only in terms of this diverse background. The Mediterranean basin long remained a major focus, even into the sixteenth century, as Ferdinand Braudel and other historians have reminded us. The shift of the centre to north-western Europe was relatively late.

Roman Catholics, therefore, if at all ecumenically minded, will readily salute the contributions of churches that later, sadly, became separate – the African churches, later Monophysite, and those of the East, later Orthodox – and will recognise that the Western Church was the poorer without their communion. They will also be right to acknowledge how many of Europe's achievements stem from the churches of the Reformation. To mention but a few of them, the scientific and industrial revolutions, as well as the development of liberal and democratic institutions, were achievements – however great their deficiencies – which took place in countries that accepted the Reformation more than in those that did not. Similarly, many theological insights, as well as the development of biblical and historical criticism, owed more to thinkers of Reformed churches than to those of the Roman Catholic tradition. Catholics are proved foolish if they try to hijack unto themselves too much of Western civilisation, or to link into medieval Christendom what really happened before or after it, or independently of it.

Holding another view

At this point I want to look at medieval Christendom more closely. There were many features of that civilisation that we find distasteful today. Here, however,

I wish to concentrate on just one aspect, namely the fact that many of the undesirable features were inextricably linked to the notion of a Christian society.

Perhaps the most obvious one was the attitude towards heretics within the Christian community and to minority groups outside it. The point is well known but it is well to remind ourselves just how strong the language was and that it came from the highest authority. The following is what the fourth Lateran council of 1215 – the Trent or Vatican II of the Middle Ages – said in decree 3, on heretics:

> We condemn all heretics, whatever names they may go under. Let those who have been condemned be handed over to the secular authorities . . . for due punishment. Persons who are found suspect of heresy are to be avoided by all until they have made adequate satisfaction. Let secular authorities be advised and urged and if necessary be compelled by ecclesiastical censure . . . to take publicly an oath for the defence of the faith to the effect that they will seek to expel from the lands subject to their jurisdiction all heretics designated by the Church in good faith.

Another general council, that of Basel in 1434, laid down the following concerning Jews and other non-Christians:

> We command both diocesan bishops and secular powers to prohibit in every way Jews and other infidels from having Christians, male or female, in their households and service, or as nurses of their children; and Christians from joining with them in festivities, marriages, banquets or baths, or in much conversation, and from taking them as doctors or agents of marriage or mediators of other contracts. They should not be given other public offices, or admitted to any academic degrees, or allowed to have on lease lands or other ecclesiastical rents . . . They are to be compelled, under severe penalties, to wear some garment whereby they can be clearly distinguished from Christians. In order to prevent too much intercourse, they should be made to dwell in areas, in cities and towns, which are apart from the dwellings of Christians and as far distant as possible from churches.

Religious and ethnic cleansing?

Other features immediately stemming from this attitude to heretics and

non-Christians are soon apparent. There must be a close union of church and state in order to safeguard the Christian society through both spiritual and temporal means. There is also the underlying idea that the Christian message is self-evidently true, so that it has only to be proclaimed for people to see its truth, and if they do not there must be some fault on their part.

This point is more difficult to identify, but I think it lies at the back of the idea of a Christian society. That is to say, a Christian society is quite natural because the Christian message is so evidently true, and so any member of it who wishes to leave it must be out of his or her mind, and therefore it is reasonable to put pressure on that person to remain, for their own protection as well as for that of others. The same decree 3 of the fourth Lateran council came close to stating the point openly: 'Heretics . . . have different faces indeed but their tails are tied together in as much as they are alike in their pride.' Thomas Aquinas, in more measured but equally devastating terms, said: 'When a person refuses to hear of the faith or even condemns it . . . this is where the full nature of unbelief properly speaking is found and where the sin lies'; and, 'There are . . . unbelievers who at one time accepted and professed the faith, such as heretics and apostates of all sorts, and these are to be submitted to physical punishment so that they should hold to what they once received and fulfil what they promised' (*Summa Theologiae*, II.II, 10, 1 and 8). William Peraldus, another thirteenth-century Dominican, made the point bluntly, claiming that those who say there is no God are insane, not just fools (*Summa Virtutum et Vitiorum*, Cologne, 1614, pp. 34ff., chapter 6).

A complete package

Another tendency was to view the Christian message as a clearly identified package, self-contained and with no loose ends, which is either accepted in its entirety or not at all. In fact there was considerable doctrinal development during the Middle Ages, but I do not think people were very aware of it at the time. Moreover, from a self-contained package that is self-evidently true it is a short step to pressurising others to accept it. It is for their good: they are fools not to accept it. Warfare was resorted to: the crusade in its various forms. Pope Innocent III described in 1215 the forthcoming Fifth Crusade as 'this business of Jesus Christ' and supported it with indulgences and ecclesiastical sanctions.

You may feel that I am drawing a much too close connection between these features of medieval Christendom that are distasteful to us today and a Christian society. It may be argued that today a Christian society is possible

that is tolerant, does not discriminate against outsiders, and so on: one that preserves the structures of the medieval Christian society but does away with its undesirable features. But I am not so sure: at least I think the connections between these negative features and any religious society, and therefore any Christian society, are much stronger than we realise. That is the nub of my argument at this point. If you are inclined to think that Christian life can only be lived properly within a Christian community, that the Christian message is a complete package of truths with no loose ends, and one that once you possess you would never in your right mind want to let go of, there won't be much room for tolerance, diversity or development within the Christian community or similar features towards outsiders.

We can see this problem within the Catholic Church today. Restorationists tend to have a very restricted notion of doctrinal development and legitimate diversity within the Church. Evangelisation, since the message is clear, is not so much a matter of deeper understanding or personal assimilation, rather the techniques of communicating an already agreed message, just improving the loudspeakers. It also surfaces in the debate on abortion. 'Pro-life' groups are surprisingly, to my mind, silent on what punishments they want women who terminate their pregnancies to undergo. Do they want them to go to prison, and if so for how long? Are they to suffer other civil penalties? If you want to make abortion illegal, you cannot duck the question of appropriate sanctions. A Christian society, and Christian moral values, are no more easily reconcilable with tolerance towards others today than they were in the Middle Ages.

A unique cocktail

It is best to look at medieval Christendom in order to learn from it, but not to try to reproduce it, either its structures or in detail. It was a remarkable civilisation but one which occurred because of a particular conjuncture of circumstances in the history of the Church. A long period, indeed over half the Church's history, from the break-up of the Roman Empire in the fifth century to the eve of the Reformation in the sixteenth century; a time when Christianity was constantly on the defensive, first on account of barbarian invasions overturning the civilised world, later from other external threats, notably Islam. Christianity was confined to a small corner of the world, and it knew this, and for long periods of time it looked as though it might be extinguished altogether by an expansionist Islam. This was before the expansion of Christianity into a worldwide religion, in the sixteenth century

and then again through European imperialism in the nineteenth, and the religious and cultural confidence, often arrogance, that went along with it.

The strengths of medieval Christendom are precisely those of a people with their backs to the wall: a depth and intensity of religious experience that is impossible in times of greater ease and pluralism; the practice of Christianity in all its forms; and a theology that reflects on this experience. Its greatest achievement was to hand on the faith, in however battered a form, through 1,000 difficult years. But inevitably there were weaknesses too: a siege mentality which quickly detected enemies both within and without; strong arguments for closing the ranks; and so on. Strengths and weaknesses go together: each age in the Church's history has its own unique cocktail of them; every age, like each individual, is a unique combination of sanctity and sinfulness. The great mistake is to think that the strengths of one time can be extracted apart from its weaknesses.

Transformation of understanding

But I want to end on a rather different note, by reminding you of just how much work has been done by historians in recent years on medieval Europe. The Middle Ages is, and has been for some years, a cult subject with a huge amount of research being done that is transforming our understanding of the period. We are in the middle of the second revolution of medieval studies. The first occurred in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the basic texts were edited and some general hypotheses were reached. In the second revolution much harder and deeper questions are being asked. So we must be careful to keep up to date at least with the general lines of recent research, especially if we wish in any way to use medieval society as a basis for present-day evangelisation. We must beware of thinking emblematically about history, and about the Middle Ages in particular, of creating the past in our own image and likeness and using it selectively to prop up our own dreams and prejudices – a mirage that will soon dissolve before our eyes.

The paradox is that recent research goes counter to some of what I have been saying, and I should admit that. The further paradox is that the Middle Ages is moving further away from the restorationists' golden idea of it, closer in touch with our late-twentieth-century society. The central point is that research is revealing a far more diverse and intricate religion and society than had ever been imagined: certainly no monolith of religious uniformity, of 100 per cent believing and practising Christians. Virtually every human thought and experience was entered into in depth, and recorded, mostly within an

overall Christian context, and that is why the period is so interesting and informative for us.

At the extreme end, a number of recent writers have suggested that medieval Europe contained atheists in quite a modern sense: Le Roy Ladurie in his best-selling book on Montaillou and Susan Reynolds in a recent article (*Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 1991) have both argued in this direction, not to mention Carlo Ginsburg's study of the slightly later (sixteenth-century) atheist, the miller Menocchio, *The Cheese and the Worms*, (London, 1980). There is the long poem *Parzival*, written in the early thirteenth century by Wolfram von Eschenbach, which was widely read and one of whose central themes is loss of faith: the work is a subject of recent interest. There is also the broad question of pagan survivals within medieval Christendom, an issue which we, living in a partly post-Christian age, can appreciate from the other end of the process. The extent of such survivals has been provocatively highlighted in a recent collection of essays edited by L. Milis, whose title translates into English as 'The Pagan Middle Ages' (*De Heidense Middeleeuwen*, Brussels, 1991).

In touch

Even within orthodoxy there was a far wider range of views than was previously thought. The idea that the magisterium of the Church should be confined to pope and bishops would have been anathema to those more broad-minded people. Altogether the attitude towards authority was more relaxed and adult. There was wit too: King Henry II of England said that he would rather become a Muslim than have to put up with Thomas Becket any longer! People were more in touch with themselves, others and the world around them, both from a human and a religious point of view, so they were able better to combine respect for traditions with proper initiatives, without an excess of nervous tension.

There were despair and suicides, as Alexander Murray has shown us in various articles, but not as frequently as in our society; so they could sympathise with our predicaments, while having sturdier temperaments they could help us too. They experienced plenty of marital problems, so they could empathise with our difficulties, yet having more fully rounded personalities they understood better all the factors involved in this wondrous area of life – the social factors especially, not only those relating to the individual.[1] They were aware of homosexuality and valued it, and were much better at finding legitimate outlets for that orientation. They knew, too, the surpassing worth,

for those called to it, of celibacy. They lived close to nature and in a pre-industrial society, so they could understand the 'green' mentality while not being uncritical of it; they knew that life is often a fight for survival. They lived as communities and were sharing constantly, so they would be appalled at the structural injustices and imbalance in the world's riches today: at a minimum there would not be mass starvation. At the same time they were no starry-eyed idealists and realised that you must have some social order, and that wealth must be created or gathered in before it can be distributed. As for particular forms of government in church and state, they had some experience of everything from democracy to monarchy, but the corporate ideal was present in all of them.

At every corner we can put our questions to medieval people, openly and without embarrassment, and receive back from them suggestions that are both sympathetic and helpful. Indeed every question relevant to this decade of evangelisation can be put to them. Yes, the restorationists are right, there is nothing more relevant to us as human beings and Christians today than to study our medieval forebears. Only, everything will be blighted if we try to reproduce their experiences instead of listening to them.

Chapter 16

Do North Americans Understand the Middle Ages Better than Europeans?

The short answer to the question posed in this title is, 'Yes, in many ways.'

First, a few words of introduction. For students and enthusiasts of the Middle Ages – the 1,000 years in western Europe from the end of the Classical world to around 1500 – May is the month of the annual International Congress on Medieval Studies sponsored by the Medieval Institute at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo. Please permit an attender from the other side of the Atlantic to make a few observations.

From small beginnings, this great congress, now known affectionately and worldwide simply as 'Kalamazoo', in many ways represents the Mecca of medieval studies today. For the 28th annual congress, held this year on May 6–9 [1993], there were some 2,700 participants. Approximately 1,200 papers were read at about 400 sessions, making this by far the largest medieval congress anywhere in the world. Sixty–four publishers, booksellers and artisans provided a wondrous exhibition and sale of books, new and second-hand, and of artifacts, with generous discounts for buyers. The four days also provided an unrivalled opportunity to meet and talk with people interested in the Middle Ages.

'Congress', the official term, is really too solemn a word. 'Kalamazoo' was an event, a celebration of the Middle Ages, a pilgrimage, a jamboree in the best sense of the word. Generous hospitality was provided – especially for pilgrims from abroad, who came in large numbers – both by Western Michigan University and by its Medieval Institute. Professor Otto Gründler, president of the Medieval Institute and now the guiding light of the congress, warmly welcomed participants, as did many societies, from numismatists to associations commemorating Richard II or Christine de Pizan. And there was more – medieval music and drama, and a famous dance. Even the weather smiled on us.

My strongest impression, speaking as one attending the congress for the first time, was of the sheer range, intensity and vitality of interest in the Middle Ages. No question is feared or regarded as taboo. That is the first reason why I believe Americans have a better understanding of the Middle Ages than Europeans do. For the medieval West was also an intensely curious civilization. Its universities were so bold and broad-minded that they gave a central place in the curriculum of lectures and disputations to what were called *Quodlibet* questions, questions about 'any matters whatsoever' that lecturers (and students) might like to raise. In all sorts of other ways every avenue of human concern was explored. 'Kalamazoo' parallels this exploration to a degree that few other institutions are prepared to do.

You may think that a similar exploration is just what has been happening in Europe during the last half-century or so, with the movement away from political and constitutional history to more sociological and psychological approaches. Witness, for example, the French *Annales* school of historians. I think, however, there is a difference. The European approach can be rather of a 'museum-piece' genre: asking curious and interesting questions of the Middle Ages, but ones that are safely distant from our present way of life – collecting curiosities, if you like. The strength of American historians is to engage their own concerns and way of life in the questions they put. Relevance makes them better able to understand a culture that was focused intimately upon the human condition.

A second reason why American historians have a privileged entry into the Middle Ages is that their civilization (apart from that of Native Americans) is of an 'age' similar to that of medieval Europe. We think of the latter as an old civilization, but it was not. Rather it was a young-to-mature culture, like that of North America today. It drew on the ancient Greek and Roman world, just as America draws on Europe. Yet it had fundamentally new beginnings in the aftermath of the fall of Rome and eventually grew into a maturity of its own, just as North America has done. In many ways Americans have a better intuitive grasp of what was going on in the Middle Ages than those living in the older world of Europe today.

So often Europe's physical proximity to its medieval past proves deceptive. On the European continent are to be found the visible remains of that past – the churches and castles and the overwhelming majority of the manuscripts. Yet we Europeans often mistake outward appearances for inner reality, the letter for the spirit, and are incredulous that others might have better insights. We are so dazzled by what we see that we fail to understand that things were once very different, especially when these differences offend us.

It is hard for us to realize, to take but one example, that the interiors of churches did not contain the austere and whitewashed walls that we now see, but rather were covered with a riot of colour and paintings. Much medieval architecture, from towers and steeples to town halls, as well as much of life, was close to the skyscrapers of New York and Chicago in striving and intent – a point that is difficult for Europeans to accept. Teaching at universities was nearer to that at American colleges than to what takes place at Oxford and Cambridge today.

This brings me to the third reason. Medieval Europe was an unusually religious world, with a diversity and exuberance in this area of life that accords better with American than with contemporary European experience. Moreover, people in the Middle Ages were able to combine religion with materialism and secularism in a way that modern Americans also manage to do, whereas Europeans nervously find only disjunction. Nobody can understand medieval Europe without coming to terms with its religion, and here too Americans have the advantage of a better intuitive grasp of the reality.

Let me not decry my own country and continent. Europeans have provided a lead and seriousness in medieval studies, sometimes correcting the excessive speculation, almost fantasizing, of some American scholars. There must be respect for these achievements. Indeed, dialogue between the two continents was a feature of 'Kalamazoo '93'. Professor John Van Engen, director of the Medieval Institute at the University of Notre Dame, initiated a major conversation with German scholars. On a smaller scale, Professor Laura Gaffuri of the history department at the University of Padua, Italy, and Professor Simon Forde, editor of the *International Medieval Bibliography* and a member of the School of History at the University of Leeds, England, carried on a dialogue regarding Italian and English sources. East European topics also figured significantly. Nevertheless, an exchange of this sort must be a dialogue of equals, in which each side is aware of its strengths. American scholars, while respecting their European colleagues, must be confident of important natural advantages they have over us, especially regarding their intuitive appreciation of medieval civilization.

In this way our understanding of this fascinating and supremely relevant period of our collective past – I say 'our' since it belongs to both sides of the Atlantic – will grow and deepen.

Chapter 17

Sin in the Middle Ages

Today sin has been banished from our *Weltanschauung* in various ways. The word itself has largely disappeared from the vocabulary of the mass media and other organs of public opinion, except perhaps for a narrow use referring to a small number of particularly blatant misdemeanours. Instead physical, psychological, sociological and various other factors are adduced to explain people's follies and crimes. All of them are good and helpful so far as they go, but very inadequate inasmuch as they remove or minimise the role of free will. Inevitably Christian attitudes too have been influenced by these factors.

I do not think anyone in the Middle Ages doubted free will or the ubiquity of sin. The word 'sin' itself does not seem to have caused them any problems. There was one clear word for it in each language: Latin *peccatum*, French *péché*, English *sin*, and so on. This does not mean that they were unaware of the complexity of what was involved. They were; but they thought a single concept did better justice to the totality of what was involved than breaking it down into component parts too quickly. The latter easily leads to forgetting or minimizing various essential parts, whereas the former preserves better the balance and interrelationship of the parts. Love might be a parallel example, where it is thought better to start with a single word.

Medieval people, moreover, were much more robust characters than we are today. So they could face the fact that they were sinners without crumpling. No doubt part of our trouble is that there had been an over-balanced, or unbalanced, emphasis on sin, to caricature: a heavy-handed God hovering to catch us out for our slightest and even unintentional mistakes. Maybe that was the mentality that prevailed in some quarters into the 1950s. Then the pendulum swung with a vengeance and sin went out of the window. Medieval people kept the pendulum better in balance, partly because they came from stronger backgrounds. Their social background was more stable and they were more rooted in nature and the human condition, quite simply in reality, than

our fragile and tempestuous environment permits. So they could take sin as part of the mystery of life, and of their own mystery, without it threatening their whole identity and world-view.

Another way in which we try to get round sin is to divide people into the good and the bad, usually placing ourselves among the former. The neo-Nazis, the racists, the anti-feminists, the polluters of the environment, they are all the unworthies. We are OK because we are not like them (at least not like the particular group that happens to be centre-stage at the time) and would never dream of having such base instincts. Medieval people had a much stronger sense of original sin. They accepted that the tendency to sin is rooted in all of us. Its manifestations vary according to our temperaments and character and state of grace, but the tendency, or 'concupiscence' as the Council of Trent called it, is there in all of us. Hence the 'holier-than-thou' figure was rare in the Middle Ages. It comes to prominence only later, with the Reformation's division of people into the saved and the damned and the opposing danger in Counter-Reformation theology of semi-Pelagianism. Medieval people knew themselves better.

Person and office

They were also much better aware, as a result, of the distinction between a person and the office that he or she holds. One of the great banes of modern life is the personalisation of office-holding. In both church and state those in authority are judged by the personalities they project more than by their actions and competence. Too much is made to hang on the personalities of a few individuals. With the pervasiveness of the mass media there is not much we can do about it, though we could be more discerning.

Without the immediate contact with public figures that the mass media appears to give us, medieval people could be more sober in their judgements. They knew that all office-holders were frail human beings and they were under no illusions about the shortcomings of individuals, yet for all that they could be loyal to the institutions embodying the offices.

St Catherine of Siena was a severe critic of individual popes while remaining a fierce defender of the institution of the papacy. Similarly, popes could savage kings without wishing to abolish kingship. The wheel of fortune was a favourite motif. The *danse macabre* paintings which were fashionable after the Black Death plague of the mid-fourteenth century, picture rulers and churchmen both in the glory of this life and as skeletons. The Church itself lent encouragement through the 'boy bishop' rituals, whereby children

acted as prelates for a while. Carnival was another time when order was inverted.

In these ways people were more relaxed about both the virtues and the shortcomings of others. All lay under the fall of Adam and Eve yet everything was forgivable and redeemable. The inherited wisdom of institutions was preserved even when their officers fell far short of the ideal. This made development, both in religious and political living, more organic and enduring, less dependent upon personal whims or likes and dislikes.

Liberating effects

Ultimately the medieval acceptance of sin had effects that were deeply liberating – for the individual, towards others, and towards God. The individual was much more at ease with himself or herself. Expectations in life were more realistic, disappointments less bitter. One of the follies of Western society today, fuelled by the media and consumer advertising, is that people are cajoled into believing that they can, and therefore to some extent should, do everything. In the domain of religion, the semi-Pelagianism influencing Roman Catholic theology and religious practice since the Counter-Reformation period has led to a too great emphasis on attaining perfection by personal striving; people all too easily give up completely if they cannot achieve everything – an 'all or nothing' mentality which especially in recent years has had a sad consequence upon Catholics lapsing unnecessarily from the practice of their religion.

Crises of identity and suicides occurred in the Middle Ages. *The Book of Margery Kempe* reveals how that remarkable woman from King's Lynn suffered a breakdown after bearing her fourteenth child; indeed her whole life might be described as a struggle for identity. King Henry VI of England went through several mental breakdowns. Alexander Murray, in various books and articles, has been investigating the occurrence of suicide in that era. Indeed every human condition was experienced. Nevertheless, extreme personality traumas were at the edges of everyday life, where they properly belong, rather than dangerously near the norm as in our present Western world. Undoubtedly a proper sense of sin meant that people could face themselves better and the world in which they lived.

This sense of sin was liberating towards others principally because it brought solidarity with others. I have made this point already. The 'holier-than-thou' mentality was much rarer because all knew they were sinners: all were in the same boat together. Saints were seen as friends rather than as

models. A basic objection to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was that it would water down Mary's solidarity with the rest of humankind. To this theological solidarity was added, of course, the social solidarity arising from the much greater sense of community in everyday life. Today we start as individuals and then struggle to build a community; medieval people started as community and within that context found their individuality.

Finally, the recognition of sin was supremely liberating towards God. It meant that people were open to the saving and elevating grace offered by Christ in a wondrous way. Acknowledgement of sin is a characteristic of saints generally, but it is especially true of medieval saints. When they proclaimed that they were the greatest of sinners, this was no play-acting. It was a sign that they were aware of the heights to which they could be drawn, since God's power is shown in our human weakness. It also meant they were not over-concerned about the details of their sins. General sinfulness was the starting and most important point, from recognition of which all divine favours were possible. Scrupulosity about the precise seriousness of particular sins, and whether or not a sin had been committed, comes for the most part with the development of casuistry in a later age.

All this did not in any way mean that they were insensitive to the horror and folly of sin. Solidarity with the human condition meant they were well aware of the frailty of human beings, that tendency to sin in the broad sense. But they also knew that consent to sin is death-bearing; that we, because we are free, have the power to destroy ourselves and to damage others. That is why they took hell so seriously. For it was the destruction, foolish and unnecessary, of all that we are capable of and long for. Medieval people knew both the heights and the depths of human destiny; the mystery that God has made us free to choose either pole. This life really is a crucial struggle between good and evil, with results that last for all eternity.

Personalisation of treatment

Medieval paintings of hell were preoccupied with the particular punishments suffered by the damned. Each person suffers punishments appropriate to his or her sins: one kind of torment for the glutton, another for the murderer, another for the avaricious, and so on. Dante's *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* (for those in purgatory) make the same points in writing.

This preoccupation can be viewed as morbid curiosity or as sadistic fantasising about other people. No doubt there was something of both features. Indeed, warning oneself of the painful effects of sin, and some outlet for anger

at the sins of others, are healthy. But there was more to the paintings than that. They were a way of telling people that sins damage them personally. They are not just external offences, like clocking up penalty points for driving offences, which can then be wiped clean by a fine. Rather they corrupt the sinner's personality, and those of others affected by the sin, interiorly and in ways that are specific to the sin committed. This understanding of the intrinsic evil of sin is of great pedagogic importance for all of us. If we grasped it better, we would be much less inclined to destroy ourselves and others.

But for medieval people punishment was also personalised in this life. This is a delicate matter but one of considerable importance. In this life too, in other words, punishment was not just an external penalty – though it was that – as it has tended to become in modern society: paying a fine or serving time in prison. Rather the penalty was made to fit the crime, in various ways. In ways that were intended as a cleansing or catharsis for the community, in ways that were meant to be helpful to the aggrieved parties, and in ways that were ultimately meant to be of assistance to the sinner or criminal. The much greater range of penalties employed, and the fact that they were carried out much more publicly than is done today, are indications of this mentality.

Holistic

It would be foolish to see these practices simply as ghoulish. No doubt the punishments employed cannot be revived in our own day *tout court.* In our pluralist society, moreover, the weaker consensus about what is morally wrong requires us to respect a sharper distinction between sin and crime. Still, even in Western societies there are moves afoot to make the penalty fit the crime more: various forms of community service are an example. Muslim societies have much to teach us in the matter. We may rightly reject some of the more extreme forms of punishment advocated by them, but this should not blind us to the positive points of their attempts at a holistic treatment of sin. Likewise in medieval society all the factors had been mulled over at great length, while we today may be forgetting some elements in our overconcentration on others.

Every age in our Christian past is a sacrament which can illuminate, heal and sanctify us. Our ancestors in the faith learnt much and they offer us the fruits of their wisdom and experience. How foolish we are to squander these opportunities! This is especially true of the Middle Ages regarding sin. For sin touches the core of our being and medieval society was permeated by Christianity to a uniquely full degree. Those thousand years from the end of

the Roman Empire to the eve of the Reformation, when Europe was largely united in its Christian faith, enabled a depth and intensity of religious experience for the whole community that was not possible before and has never been repeated since. No wonder that much was learnt about the mystery of sin and its place in our lives!

O happy fault! (*O felix culpa*!) proclaims the deacon in the Exultet at the Easter vigil. This song takes us back to the beginnings of our period, originating probably in the seventh-century Gallican church. From this most beautiful and renowned of all Christian hymns concerning sin and our redemption, medieval Christianity plumbed ever further the depths of this mystery and the heights to which we are called.

Chapter 18

Making Merry in the Middle Ages

> *In the Middle Ages all life was sport, in a sense. Or, if you like, sport entered into all life. Or, at least, life was much less compartmentalised than today, so that sport was one element that permeated it through and through, rather than one thing among others that people do.*

The *Middle English Dictionary* gives the following as the principal definitions (or descriptions) of sport:

> Amusement, entertainment; pleasure, fun; also, an activity that brings pleasure or amusement; a pastime or game; also a sexual exploit, an amorous deed; hence, to take one's pleasure, have fun; to participate in merry-making, create amusement, make sport: a source of pleasure or delight: joking, foolery.

As secondary descriptions it gives: 'solace, consolation; also, a means of comfort or consolation'.

This is a far cry from the tightly defined sports of today: cricket, football and tennis. But can we call bridge or gardening sports? I remember at Oxford in the 1960s there was an emotional debate as to whether tiddly-winks ranked as a sport, because only if it did could members of the university team be awarded a Half-blue (since Blues - or Half-blues for minor sports - those prestigious awards given to members of the team who played in the annual match against Cambridge, were available only for sports/games, not for other activities). For medieval people the questions, and their implicit divisions of human activity, would have seemed ridiculous.

In her distinguished recent book, *The English at Play in the Middle Ages*,[1] Teresa McLean gave the following titles to the book's eight chapters: Out of

Doors; Animal Sports; Hunting, Hawking and Fishing; Tournaments, Jousts and Tilts; Outdoor and House and Garden Games; Board, Table; Glee, Medieval Music, Singing and Dancing; Medieval Drama; Folk Games. The titles already give an idea of the broad range of play as well as the overlaps between various types of it. Much the same would have been true for the rest of Europe as for England, though the author does indicate some specifically English characteristics. Another connected point is that play (or sport) sprang from the heart of life, both personal and social. As the publisher's introduction to the book says, 'Medieval games were always part of the fabric of everyday life and often embraced some useful purpose.' Different from today when, after a day's work, we try to find forty minutes for a game of squash, or a fortnight's holiday in the summer – definite times and compartments of our life.

The theologians

Relaxation and diversion were seen as a necessary part of life, much the same as today but with more moral and theological underpinning. Thomas Aquinas, the great Dominican theologian of the thirteenth century, not himself much given to sport so far as we know, or even to jokes, at least in the writing of his *Summa Theologiae,* nevertheless discusses the issue in 11.11. 168 of the said work, on 'Good manners'.[2] Aquinas comes to the point in article 2: 'Whether there can be virtue in the acts we do in play'. John Chrysostom's argument that 'the devil, not God, sends us to sport', he counters by asserting that it refers to people who play inordinately and especially those who make amusement their main purpose in life.

Augustine of Hippo's counsel is quoted with more approval, 'Spare yourself I pray, for it befits a wise man to relax at times and soften the edge of attention'. Speaking his own mind Aquinas says, 'Man must rest his body for physical refreshment because he cannot work without intermission', and he proceeds to quote with approval from the *Conferences* of the Abbot Cassian, in which:

> it is related of blessed John the Evangelist that when people were scandalised at finding him at play with his disciples, he requested one of his questioners who carried a bow to shoot an arrow. When this had been done several times, the man, on being asked whether he could keep on doing so continuously, replied that the bow would break. Whereupon the blessed John pointed the moral that so, too, would the human spirit snap were it never unbent.

Aquinas's approval of sport or play, so far, may seem to be rather grudging, a concession to human weakness rather than positive approval, and to be more of the intellectual kind than the physical: the conversation that might take place in a Dominican calefactory during official recreation time rather than the more physical activities discussed in Teresa McLean's book. The concessionary nature is emphasised in the next article, 3: 'Of the sin of playing too much', where the limits of lawful sport are pointed out. However, in the final article 4, entitled 'Of the sin of playing too little', a much more upbeat note is struck.

> It is against reason for a man to be burdensome to others, by never showing himself agreeable to others or being a kill-joy or wet blanket on their enjoyment. And so Seneca says, 'Bear yourself with wit, lest you be regarded as sour or despised as dull.' Now those who lack playfulness are sinful, those who never say anything to make you smile, or are grumpy with those who do. Aristotle speaks of them as rough and boorish.[3]

An extensive and more theoretical treatment of enjoyment *(fruitio)* is to be found in II.I.11 of the *Summa*.

Moral theologians in the Middle Ages may appear to have been excessively negative towards sport, the 'kill-joys' censured by Aquinas, constantly harping on dangers rather than on any positive merits. But I think the reality was that people were so fond of sport that they needed some check, some direction of their energies, which the clergy tried to provide. Quite the opposite from today, in our hectic world, at least in some quarters, when we need to be encouraged to take more time off. At least in my own order, the Society of Jesus, we are exhorted by the Provincial and other superiors to relax more, and I understand that religious orders of women have received similar warnings!

One area, however, in which the clergy were stout defenders of sport – at least in the important sense of rest and relaxation – was the matter of Sundays and feast-days. Fifty-two Sundays and about the same number of feast-days each year (the exact number of the latter varied at different times and in different regions) were exempt from work, largely thanks to legislation initiated by the Church. It is true that the primary concern of the legislation was to provide people with the opportunity to attend the Eucharist – indeed, there was an obligation to do so – and much of it concerned the prohibition of illicit forms of sport and recreation, such as drunkenness and immorality.

As Jacques Toussaert said in his classic work on late medieval Flanders, the problem in that region was frivolity and licentiousness, not work![4] Nevertheless not even the rigorists expected people to spend the whole day in church or at prayer, so the Church's protection of proper human rest and leisure should not be overlooked: a fight too for justice, defending the vulnerable from exploitation of their work. How contrasting is the attitude of church leaders today, who have more or less given up trying to defend the sanctity of Sundays, let alone that of feast-days.

Popular attitudes

In other areas of sport, however, especially regarding the details, the magisterium or teaching authority belonged largely to the laity. Indeed the Church seems to have exercised remarkably little influence upon this vital dimension of life. A fundamental difficulty was, no doubt, that Scripture has relatively little to say about the matter, surprisingly so in view of its importance. Maybe this is because Scripture is concerned with the urgency of salvation, whereas sport, at least in the medieval sense, was about the non-urgent side of life, the need for relaxation, to 'unbend' as Cassian put it. (Or maybe rather the problem is ours, being too wooden to understand the Bible's sense of humour.)

Anyway, if you want to find Christian models for sport, do not look for them in the Middle Ages. Sport, like building houses and cooking and so on, was an aspect of human nature that Christianity inherited and never made much impression on in this period. The Church tried to cope with it as best it could, here and there, so to speak, without any consistent attempt to 'baptise' it. For 'muscular Christianity', or Catholic football teams and mountaineering clubs, or articles on Catholic sport stars in *The Universe* and other religious newspapers, it is necessary to wait until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as the Roman Catholic Church tried explicitly to reach all areas of life, partly in its drive to show Protestants and secular humanists that Catholics could do better anything that they did! Maybe indeed the medieval approach is wiser, or at least it is advisable to tread very warily in these areas of life.

McLean's chapter titles provide some idea of the sports that were indulged in. The amount of violence in them may horrify us today but it was an essential aspect of them: indeed the book goes so far as to say 'medieval games were generally violent' (publisher's introduction). Partly they were forms of semi-institutionalised violence, safety-valves for our competitive and aggressive

drives that any society is wise to provide some outlets for. Partly they 'embraced some useful purpose', as mentioned earlier. War was part of the fabric of life, people had to defend themselves: so Tournaments, Jousts and Tilts (chapter 4) made sense. People ate meat and fish, so Hunting, Hawking and Fishing (chapter 3) made sense. There was some gratuitous cruelty to animals, as in bear-baiting or cock-fighting, but people were tolerant of each other's views and reluctant to impose their own political correctness on others. Nobody was *obliged* to take part in these sports.

Indeed, people lived in close proximity with animals such as only farmers can understand today. Farm animals, not just domestic pets, lived under the same roof, often in the same room, as humans. An I-Thou relationship, not of equality but still of some intimacy and understanding, was reached with them. A wide variety of animals – not just dogs and horses and a few others, as today – seem to have understood human beings and their needs, in a sense to have loved them to the extent of being willing to sacrifice themselves for them. Human beings did not reciprocate with the same tenderness and self-sacrifice, to be sure, but at least they gave many animals the pleasure of living with them and sharing in their life, as is portrayed well in Pieter Bruegel's 'The Hunters in the Snow'.

I remember the defence of bull-fighting by a gentle and most gracious Spanish lady. When I visited her family in Madrid, the choice of an outing was between a visit to Toledo or going to a bull-fight. To my amazement she urged the second choice, arguing vigorously that (self-righteous) northerners were misinformed to see bull-fighting simply in terms of cruelty and violence. Rather, she said, the contest, with its elaborate rituals, represented beautifully the pathos of human existence and our relationship with the animal kingdom and the forces of nature. Perhaps in this matter we should learn from Catholic Spain, as in so much else. Certainly much of medieval sport is intelligible only in terms of animals.

Higher ideals

The archetypal sport, in this life, was sexual intercourse. Britain today is known for its enthusiasm for sports, yet there can be the saying 'No sex here please, we're British!' Such a dichotomy would have been unthinkable in the medieval world. Sport circled around the core of the human psyche and social relations, so naturally it was linked to that most exalted and intimate human activity. Not only was sexual intercourse seen as an eminent form of sport, more than that, all other sports were seen in terms of it. The point would have been taken more

or less for granted, without any embarrassment or prudishness. It reveals a proper respect for both sex and sport, not a trivialisation of either.

The point is underlined by the way in which the spiritual life, our relationship with God, was also seen in sexual terms. Many writers expressed themselves fervently in these categories: the 'love mysticism' of beguines such as Hadewijch and Margarete Porete; the 'spiritual espousals' of Jan van Ruysbroec; and John of the Cross too, if he may be seen as a late medieval rather than a Counter-Reformation figure. This was why celibacy was so important. For however much married life was valued and enjoyed, celibacy gave a special entry into, was a foretaste of, that still higher sport: the very enjoyment *(fruitio)* of God, the beatific vision.

Medieval sports can be seen as embryonic forms of modem games: football on the village green as an embryonic Premier Division match, tennis games as early forms of Wimbledon; as if everything should lead up to the glories of our modern organised sport. But that is the wrong way round. Medieval people would probably have seen modem sports – if they could have been asked – as a decline rather than a development. Professionalism and commercialisation have made sports almost into separate occupations, their stars into idols. Sports today have become detached from the realities of life, so that they are a distraction from it rather than an enhancement – {well, almost!}

CHAPTER 19

Christianity vs 'Paganism'? Reflections on Medieval Europe

The Middle Ages is a long time – half the history of Christianity if one measures it in round numbers from 500 to 1500, from the break-up of the Roman Empire, the end of the age of the Fathers and of the early councils, to the eve of the Reformation – and the reputation of the Church during it has come in for many ups and downs.

The Protestant critique

The Protestant Reformation, coming immediately after the end of the Middle Ages, was overwhelmingly hostile towards it. The Reformers regarded it as a time when the Church deviated seriously from the purity of the Gospel and of the early Church, both in doctrine and in life-style, and the deviation explained the need for the Reformation. This attitude remained for a long time. Until quite recently, for example, courses in Church history in many Protestant theological colleges, or in my own university of Oxford in Britain, jumped straight from the Council of Chalcedon in 451 to the traditional beginning of the Reformation in 1517 when Martin Luther published his 95 theses: thereby virtually ignoring half the Church's history in between.

The Counter-Reformation critique and defence

The Counter-Reformation, the Catholic response to the Protestant Reformation, was not much more sympathetic. It is true that, in terms of doctrine, Catholic theologians were eager to prove the orthodoxy of the medieval Church, to refute the Protestants' claim that during this time doctrine had become

corrupted and untrustworthy. The Counter-Reformation period produced, for example, the great editions of medieval Church Councils, most notably the *Roman edition* of 1608–12, which included for the first time the ten General Councils of the Western church from Lateran I (1123) to Lateran V (1512–17): a work that was motivated in part by the wish to show that these councils were genuinely ecumenical, with the same status as earlier councils. There was also some interest in medieval contributions to various other doctrinal issues in dispute between Reformation and Counter-Reformation: the sacraments, teaching on justification, the value of clerical celibacy and the importance of religious orders, and some others.

On the other hand, the Counter-Reformation largely accepted the Protestants' criticism that the medieval Church had failed seriously in terms of discipline and life-style, as distinct from doctrine. The reasons for this acceptance are complex and perhaps surprising but they may be reduced to three principal ones.

First, it allowed the success of the Reformation to be explained without justifying it. That is to say, Catholics of the Counter-Reformation era had to come to terms with the enduring success of the Protestant Reformation and the fact that it was not going to go away. By the seventeenth century, certainly by the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, which brought to an end the Thirty Years War, it was evident that at least half of Western Christendom had opted for various forms of the Reformation, including many of the more prosperous and advanced regions – England, Germany and the Netherlands, for example – and that Protestantism was there to stay for a long time.

Acknowledging that Christians in the Middle Ages had failed in their moral lives while retaining the purity of doctrine – even if a few abuses or misunderstandings had crept into this area too, such as notorious preachers who suggested that heaven could be purchased by offering money for indulgences – was a way of saying that the Reformation was understandable – and hence its success – but not justifiable. In other words, the credulous and gullible masses had been led astray by the Reformers' more or less justifiable criticisms of behaviour in the late medieval Church into accepting also their unwarranted doctrinal innovations.

The second reason is more subtle and usually understated but important nevertheless. Counter-Reformation propaganda was dominated by members of the new religious orders, most notably the Jesuits and to a lesser extent the Oratorians. These orders, especially the Jesuits, had many enemies within the Catholic Church and their very existence was often under threat, so that they had a pressing need to justify their existence and importance for the Church.

The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, canon 13, had forbidden the foundation of any more religious orders, and this prohibition was renewed in 1274 by the second Council of Lyons, canon 23. Those opposed to the new orders of the Counter-Reformation quoted both decrees in support of their hostility. Some Dominicans, moreover, regarded the Jesuits especially as an unnecessary and harmful duplication of their own order: everything that was good in the Society of Jesus was already contained in the Order of Preachers.

One way whereby the new orders countered these arguments and justified their existence was to claim that the institutional Church in the late Middle Ages, including its religious orders, had failed to maintain high standards, at least in terms of morality and discipline, and hence the new movements of the Counter-Reformation, including the religious orders, were necessary in order both to combat the Protestant Reformation and to restore vitality within the Catholic community, The new orders, therefore, had little reason to defend the medieval Church in terms of its practice, indeed almost an incentive to accept the Protestants' critique of it.

Thirdly, the Counter-Reformation inherited the Church's close links with the Renaissance. This movement, which exalted the classical world of Greece and Rome, in philosophy, literature, art, architecture and other fields, was by contrast generally scornful of the Middle Ages. Several popes identified themselves closely with the Renaissance, patronising Michelangelo, Raphael and other artists; so too, in various ways, did many Catholic scholars such as Erasmus and Thomas More. The Counter-Reformation itself was divided in its attitude towards the movement. There was a Puritan wing that disliked what it saw as its paganism and immorality: Pope Paul IV, for example, was prevailed upon to order Michelangelo's nude figures in the Sistine Chapel to be covered with drapes, which remain today. Others remained more favourable to at least some aspects of the Renaissance, for example Jesuits in their educational work, and even those opposed to it generally avoided open hostility because of the Church's close identification with it, including at the level of the papacy, at an earlier date. In this way medieval Christianity remained under a shadow, an object of Renaissance hostility.

Enlightenment: curiosity

The eighteenth-century Enlightenment dealt a further blow to its reputation. In their exaltation of reason over faith, Voltaire and others treated medieval Christianity as a paradigm of superstition and ignorance. 'Medieval' became almost synonymous with barbarism and stupidity.

Even at this time, however, there were glimmerings of a renewed interest in and appreciation of the Middle Ages. Antiquarians collected information and records about this past era; artists drew sketches of its buildings, semi-ruined or otherwise. Indeed in many cases our knowledge of medieval institutions, especially buildings, depends largely upon their curiosity. Our only pictures, for example, of the great abbey church of Cluny in France, the largest church in medieval Christendom, and of many other churches destroyed during the French revolutionary era, or in the course of the Reformation and the ensuing religious wars, or, sometimes, as in the case of St Peter's basilica in Rome, pulled down by Catholic churchmen themselves eager for new edifices in the Baroque style, come from these artists. In these centuries, however, public voices in favour of the Middle Ages were few.

Romanticism: recovery

The swing of the pendulum gathered momentum with the Romantic movement of the nineteenth century. In architecture, the neatness and order of Classicism gave way to a renewed interest in the medieval style: the word 'Gothic', hitherto a term of derision by association with the barbarian Goths, suddenly came back into vogue and nineteenth-century architects tried to recapture the brilliance and imagination of their medieval forebears. The result was 'neo-Gothic' or 'Victorian Gothic' architecture, especially in the English-speaking world: St Pancras railway station in London or Richard Upjohn's Trinity Church in New York. In art and literature, rationality gave way to emotion and the passions – the artist Delacroix or the writer Wordsworth – and here too there was fascination with the rugged creativity of the medieval world.

Romanticism began mainly as a secular movement and initially its interest in the Middle Ages was not primarily religious. Interest in the medieval world, however, could not be separated from some appreciation of its religion, and thus medieval Christianity and the Church were drawn into the movement. Church authorities and theologians, too, began to take more notice of medieval Christendom. For the most part this specifically Christian concern for the Middle Ages came from Catholics rather than Protestants, since for the latter the period still largely remained a taboo, as mentioned earlier, though there were some exceptions and among High Church Anglicans, for example, there was considerable research into the medieval Church as they sought to show the Anglican Church's continuity with it.

Catholic thinkers had various reasons for this revival of interest in the Middle Ages. Many of them regarded it as a Golden Age, before the sad divisions of the Reformation and when church and state lived in relative harmony. It was a model to which Catholics could look back with pride – *their* heritage, whereas the Protestants rejected it – and which they could in some measure try to restore and return to. It was especially the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the 'High Middle Ages', that were seen as the Golden Age, whereas the 'late Middle Ages' of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were viewed rather as a decline from this high plateau, a time when things began to go wrong; an interpretation that could still allow for both the success of the Reformation and the need for the Counter-Reformation, as mentioned earlier.

Pope Leo XIII and the Dominicans led the rehabilitation of medieval philosophy and theology by exalting scholasticism, and especially Thomas Aquinas, into virtually the official thinking of the Catholic Church. In the revival of Catholic social teaching around the same time, medieval society provided something of a model and a point of reference. In all these ways, therefore, there was a renewed appreciation of medieval Christendom, among Catholics especially: it provided an apologetic tool against the churches of the Reformation, a source of strength and inspiration within the Catholic community itself, and quite simply an object of fascination and curiosity.

Was Europe ever Christian?

This was how the situation largely remained until the 1950s. Then there emerged a generation of medievalists many of whom were not committed Christians and as a result did not feel bound by the confessional approaches, both Catholic and Protestant, that had dominated the scholarship hitherto. Among many Catholic and Protestant scholars, too, especially after the second Vatican Council of 1962–5, a more ecumenical and tolerant approach reigned. This is not to say that interest in the Middle Ages, including its religion, waned; far from it. The phenomenal success of the annual medieval conference at Kalamazoo in USA, which has attracted several thousand academics each year in recent times, or its young offspring held annually at Leeds in England, as well as more widely throughout Europe the numerous conferences and institutes, publications and university courses dedicated to medieval studies, witness to a remarkably high level of interest in the subject, at least in the Western world. The change has been, rather, in the more eclectic approach that has prevailed

That is to say, the medieval world and its religion have been subjected to a much wider range of questions and interpretations. Economic and social

historians have brought their insights, so too have psychologists. Indeed, in recent years a full post-modernist unfolding of questions has come about. One result for the church historian has been the questioning of whether medieval Europe was really so Christian after all. Earlier, it is true, Protestant historians had argued that Christianity had become deformed in the Middle Ages, but the underlying assumption was that it was a falling away from a better and more Christian early Church and that Christianity, or at least the Church, continued to provide the basic framework.

But recently some historians have been asking whether Europe had ever really been Christian, whether paganism had in fact retained its grip on the large majority of a population that was Christian only in name. Some of them have drawn a distinction between the clerical élite, which may have assimilated Christianity in some depth, and the mass of the laity, who were at best only superficially Christianised. Others, mostly early modern historians, such as the Frenchman, Jean Delumeau, have contrasted the medieval period with the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, arguing that it was only with the Reformation and Counter-Reformation that Europe was Christianised in any depth.

Milis's Book

Ludo Milis (ed.), *The Pagan Middle Ages* (Brussels, 1998), represents the full swing of the pendulum. As the title suggests, the book confronts openly the question of paganism in medieval Europe. It is not primarily concerned to trace the history of the debate, as outlined above, though there is some treatment of the historiography, mainly in chapter 1; yet something of this background is essential for understanding the book and aspects of the debate are often implicit in it.

The work first appeared in 1991 as *De Heidense Middeleeuwen* and readers not fluent in Flemish must be grateful to the translator, Tanis Guest, for making available the present English version. Professor Milis, of the university of Ghent, has written the Introduction (chapter 1) and the Conclusion (chapter 8) as well as chapter 7, 'Purity, Sex and Sin'. Four other former colleagues at Ghent university are responsible for chapters 2 and 4–6: M. De Reu, 'The Missionaries: The First Contact between Paganism and Christianity'; C. Lebbe, 'The Shadow Realm between Life and Death'; A. Waegeman, 'The Medieval Sybil'; and V. Charon, 'The Knowledge of Herbs'. A. Dierkens, of the Free University of Brussels, contributed chapter 3, 'The Evidence of Archaeology'.

It is a slim volume of 156 pages of text, which includes useful bibliographies at the end of each chapter. Indeed, my first reaction was to feel that if this is all the paganism that can be found in the Middle Ages, there cannot have been so very much of it. It is true that the book does not pretend to be a comprehensive treatment of paganism in medieval Europe, rather a collection of essays on individual aspects of the topic. It is also true that, as the writers point out, there was no doubt considerably more paganism than the surviving evidence suggests inasmuch as people had an obvious incentive not to leave such evidence around, namely the fear of revelation and ensuing punishment.

Nevertheless, the evidence is rather thinner than I was expecting and certainly does not suggest that paganism was in any way the accepted or official religion of the majority of people. Are the statements on the dustjacket substantiated? 'The book sets out to show that paganism remained a force to be reckoned with, although concealed beneath a veneer of Christianity, well into the Middle Ages.' And, '. . . in matters of human sexuality or life and death, Christian theology at best provided an alternative, but never a permanent substitute, to non-Christian attitudes.' There are two serious reservations that I have about the writers' approach, which pick up on points mentioned earlier in this review.

Clergy and laity

First, there appears in the book a continuing adherence to the distinction between a clerical élite and the mass of the laity (see, for example, Milis on p. 8). This distinction was fashionable some years ago and the argument runs more or less as follows. Priests and members of religious orders, at least the better educated among them, were for the most part committed Christians and may be assumed to have assimilated Christianity in some depth. They, moreover, were responsible for the overwhelming majority of the documentary evidence that survives about medieval Christianity, since literacy, and therefore the ability to write documents, was almost exclusively their preserve. This imbalance in the evidence produces an imbalance in the picture presented. There is no reason to think that in fact the laity were anything like as committed to Christianity as the clergy, indeed their illiteracy made it almost impossible for them to grasp in depth 'a religion of the book' (the Bible). Much of the commitment of the lay élite, moreover, may be explained in terms of the political advantages and legitimacy that Christianity conferred upon them rather than in terms of genuine religious commitment.

There are several difficulties with this line of argument. First, there is mounting evidence that the level of literacy among the laity was rather higher than previously thought: perhaps 20 per cent in many parts of Europe in the later Middle Ages. Secondly, there were other ways of acquiring book-knowledge, and knowledge of the Bible, than being able to read. Frequently books were read aloud to a group of people and the listeners, generally having much better memories than we have today, could become quite learned without actually being able to read themselves. Margery Kempe, for example, the eccentric English mystic, grew both in learning and in piety in this way, albeit at the cost of irritating her fellow listeners by the frequency and noise of her weeping. Others surely gained great understanding of their faith – experiential as well as intellectual – through the liturgy, art and other sensible media. In other ways, too, the writers in *The Pagan Middle Ages* presuppose a more intellectual and literate concept of Christianity than is warranted. Christianity may be a religion of the book, but it certainly is not exclusively so: Jesus Christ was first and foremost a person, and Christianity is concerned with human beings in the round.

Another point is that priests and members of religious orders grew up as lay people, for the first 20 or so years of their life, so that the clergy are in many ways better thought of as an extension of the laity rather than as a separate caste. Indeed, frequently they were criticised for being too close to the laity, too involved in the things of the world, rather than too separate from them. Strong anti-clericalism does not appear to have been prevalent among the laity: many of them were more 'clerical' than the clergy – they wanted the clergy to be better priests and better religious, not for these ways of life to be abolished. The devout laity, especially in the later Middle Ages, often sought to imitate the religious practices of the clergy, not to distance themselves from them, to practise a 'clerical' religion while remaining lay people in the world. These and other overlaps between clergy and laity, between so-called elitist and popular religion, need to be brought out. Indeed, it is wrong to begin with a distinction between elitist and popular: by starting with it a false dichotomy is set up and many false problems arise: it is better to begin with the whole Christian people and to see the variations within that context.

Christianity and 'Paganism'

My second reservation also raises theological issues about the nature of Christianity. That is to say, the writers in the book tend to assume that Christianity is a 'pure' religion that is clearly defined and clearly distinct from

paganism. Whenever they find what they regard as pagan elements – the use of charms and magic or pre-Christian customs in rites of death, for example – they quickly reach the conclusion that these are incompatible with Christianity and therefore paganism was rampant. But Christianity is not a religion among other religions, each in its own almost watertight and clearly defined compartment. Christianity claims to be truth and so is not opposed to creation and the natural order, or separate from them; rather it accepts them and seeks to act as a leaven within them, raising them to a new level. 'Grace perfects nature, not destroys it', according to the dictum of scholastic theology.

In this connection, the following statements are to be found in the book. 'Christianity had to adapt to the demands of pagan culture and society in order to become the dominant religion' (dustjacket). 'A great many originally pagan rites, usages, ideas and ways of presenting things were "received", that is, adopted and adapted, by Christianity' (Milis on p. 7). 'At that time [the early Middle Ages] conversion was still very superficial . . . the Church made use (among many things) of forms of expression and concepts from the "old paganisms" to transform Jesus' teaching into Christianity' (Waegeman on p. 83). All these statements, and others, it seems to me, exaggerate the incompatibility in principle between 'paganism' (a concept that is used somewhat as a catch-all in the book and perhaps not adequately analysed or unpacked into its component parts) and Christianity. The authors have an ideal of a pure and unadulterated Christianity and wherever they detect residual paganism they conclude that Christianity must have been corrupted.

Christianity, however, has never existed in a 'pure' form, except in the person of Jesus Christ. The Word became flesh: Christianity is an incarnational religion. It does not exist in the abstract, rather in individuals and particular historical situations. Of course, there are tensions when the gospel message arrives. Christianity challenges whatever culture it meets, in seeking to elevate it, as well as being challenged by the culture. Nevertheless, the ability of medieval Christianity to become inculturated into the wider non-Christian world, including what may be loosely termed paganism, to be challenged and influenced by it and to incorporate, or at least baptise, its good and positive elements should be seen as a strength of medieval Christianity, not as a weakness and a mere succumbing to paganism. Its ability to harbour the emotional, sensible and community aspects of human nature was a great strength and a basic reason for the remarkable success of medieval Christianity; whereas Christianity during the Reformation, Counter-Reformation and Enlightenment was in danger of over-emphasis upon intellectual formulations

and on individualism, almost an embarrassment with the natural side of human beings.

There is, too, a preoccupation in the book with ethics: Christianity is seen very much in ethical terms, as a code of conduct. Thus, the writers are much concerned with comparing Christian morality to that of paganism and with showing how Christianity continued to be influenced by the latter, or succumbed to it. Well, the gospel certainly makes moral demands upon people but they are not its starting point: other aspects of its message seem more central. Moreover, a 'pure' Christian morality exists only in terms of general principles: as soon as the details are attended to, there must be adaptation to particular circumstances: incarnation and inculturation. In this way, therefore, Christianity is not adverse to outside customs and conventions: indeed at its best it is positively attentive to them. Such attentiveness in the Middle Ages, therefore, should be seen, in the first place, as a strength rather than as corruption or as compromise with paganism.

In conclusion, readers must be grateful to Professor Milis and his colleagues for confronting us with basic questions about religion in medieval Europe. We are made to think about the mainstream of Christianity for half its history. The contributors provide many intriguing examples of outside 'pagan' influences, yet more theological reflection upon the nature of Christianity suggests that its ability to incorporate the best in so-called paganism should be seen as an asset, fully in keeping with the gospel message and a source of wise teaching for us today, rather than as a corruption of the purity of the gospel.

Chapter 20

Inquisition and Holy Office

The Inquisition conjures up, for our modern sensibilities, one of the most unpleasant ghosts of the Christian past: inquiry into religious beliefs and practices, areas thought to be very personal and private; extraction of information, often about other people, by various means of pressure, including torture; physical punishment for these beliefs and practices, including capital punishment.

The Inquisition with a capital 'I' must be distinguished from inquisition. Inquiry (*inquisitio*) into religion, notably through the enforcement of emperor worship, was a feature of the Roman empire into which Christianity was born and within which it lived for several centuries. Indeed it has been a feature of most societies, more or less pronounced. Christianity took over many features of the Roman empire's procedures of religious inquiry when it emerged as the official religion of the empire from the early 4th century onwards, enshrining them most notably in Book 16 of the Theodosian Code (438/9). In the following centuries uniformity of religion, including inquiry and coercion, were features, with varying degrees of intensity, of most communities that became predominantly Christian.

The beginning of *the* Inquisition is usually dated to the reign of Pope Gregory IX (1227–41), often to the bulls issued by him in 1231, though his pontificate witnessed a crystallization of existing trends rather than a sudden change of policy. In a series of measures the Pope reserved the investigation of heresy to officials appointed by him, thereby withdrawing the matter from the authority of both secular rulers and the bishops of the locality. Part of the context was the growing threat of the neo-Gnostic Cathar heresy in southern Europe. Usually friars of the two mendicant orders, Dominicans and Franciscans, were appointed as the inquisitors, and gradually a body of recognized procedures and penalties grew up. Historians debate to what extent there was an institution rather than just *ad hoc* commissions to individuals.

The commissions were confined to certain countries, notably France, Germany and northern Italy, so that in many others, including England, the Inquisition never functioned and the prosecution of heresy remained in the hands of the local bishops and other ecclesiastics. In Spain a separate Inquisition, known as the Spanish Inquisition, was established in 1478, approved by the pope but under royal control.

Torture was authorized by Pope Innocent IV in 1252. Penalties ranged from mild penances to imprisonment, scourgings and the ultimate sanction, usually reserved for relapsed or obstinate offenders, of being handed over to the secular authorities, which meant death, normally by burning at the stake. Indeed, church and state usually co-operated closely in the matter. While there was a genuine desire for the conversion of the sinner and mercy was often preferred, nevertheless corporal punishment was frequent and many people were put to death. In part there was a desire to protect other members of the Christian community from what was regarded as the infection of heresy, partly there was a sense that the Christian gospel is self-evidently true so that anybody who has seen the light and then rejects it must be gravely at fault.

The Inquisition survived the Reformation. In 1542 Pope Paul III centralized its authority in Rome as *Sacra Congregatio Romanae et Universalis Inquisitionis seu Sancti Officii*. It was given supreme authority, under the Pope, in doctrinal matters and it issued decrees on most topics in debate within the Roman Catholic Church in the following centuries, often with beneficial effects. However, its condemnation of the heliocentric theories of the astronomer Galileo in the early seventeenth century was an error of judgement that took centuries to reverse, and its decree *Lamentabili* against modernism in 1907 damaged the credibility of the church.

The Spanish Inquisition was finally abolished in 1834. The Roman Inquisition's name was changed in 1908 to *Congregatio Sancti Officii* (The Holy Office) and in 1965 to *Congregatio pro Doctrine Fidei* (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith). Decrees and spiritual penalties continue to be promulgated by it – the excommunication of Tissa Balasuriya of Sri Lanka as recently as 1997 – but corporal punishment has not been attempted for some time. Pope Paul VI in 1965, moreover, gave it the task of promoting good theology and sound doctrine, not just safeguarding them. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger became its energetic head (prefect) in 1981. It continues to occupy the building designed for it in the late sixteenth century, in the Piazza del S. Uffizio next to the basilica of St Peter.

Some monitoring of orthodoxy is necessary. To some extent, too, the Inquisition may be explained by historical and cultural conditions, particularly

the emergence of a predominantly single-religion (Christian) society in the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, in terms of its involvement in coercion, it may be regarded as one of the saddest deviations in the whole of Christian history, and partly accounts for the fact that Christianity has been perhaps the most intolerant of all world religions. There was always a minority of Christians who opposed at least its coercive measures and physical punishments, mostly among the laity, illustrating once again that their instincts are often better than those of the clergy. Even in recent times its image has been too negative and condemnatory, insufficiently promoting theology according to the mind of Pope Paul VI: though its merits and its effort to preserve the brilliance of Christian revelation should also be appreciated.

Denzinger, H. and Hünermann, P. (eds.), *Enchiridion Symbolorum, Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum* (37th edn., Freiburg in Breisgan, 1991), for the decrees of the Holy Office and the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith.

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Notes

Chapter 1

Medieval Crusade Decrees and Ignatius's Meditation on the Kingdom

[This chapter was first published in *The Heythrop Journal*, xxxi (1990), pp. 505–15. The copyright for the original article is hereby acknowledged.]

1 For the fullest and best treatment, and a guide to earlier bibliography, see H. Wolter, 'Elemente der Kreuzzugsfrömmigkeit in der Spiritualität des heiligen Ignatius', in F. Wulf (ed.), *Ignatius von Loyola: seine geistliche Gestalt und sein Vermächtnis, 1556–1956* (Würzburg, 1956), pp. 111–150, translated as : 'Elements of Crusade Spirituality in St Ignatius', in F. Wulf (ed.), *Ignatius of Loyola: His Personality and Spiritual Heritage, 1556–1956* (St Louis, MO, Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1977), pp. 97–134. Subsequent references are to this English version. For more recent treatments, see especially: R.L. Schmitt, 'The Christ-Experience and Relationship Fostered in the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola', *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, vol. 6, no. 5 (October 1974), 217–55; R. García Mateo, 'El "Rey eternal": Ética política y espiritualidad', *Manresa*, vol. 60 (1988), 135–45. For help and encouragement in writing this essay I wish to thank especially Professor Terence O'Reilly of University College Cork and David Lonsdale and Philip Endean of the Society of Jesus. Errors and inadequacies, however, remain entirely mine.

2 Wolter, 'Elements' (see note 1), p. 101.

3 Schmitt, 'The Christ-Experience' (see note 1), p. 227.

4 *Ibid*, pp. 231–41.

5 Wolter, 'Elements' (see note 1), p. 107.

6 *Ibid*, pp. 106, 112, 125 and 134.

7 C. de Dalmases, *Ignatius of Loyola*, *Founder of the Jesuits*, translated by J. Aixalá (St Louis, MO, 1985), pp. 45–6, 75–80, 120–1, 147–8 and 160–3.

8 Wolter, 'Elements' (see note 1), p. 134.

9 *Ibid*.

10 *Ibid*, p. 101.

11 During the epoch of medieval crusades the Western Church held the following ten general councils: Lateran I (1123), Lateran II (1139), Lateran III (1189), Lateran IV (1215), Lyons I (1245), Lyons II (1274), Vienne (1311–12), Constance (1414–18), Basel-Florence (1431–45), Lateran V (1512–17). Of these ten councils, Lateran V issued two crusade decrees and the following issued one each: Lateran I, Lateran IV, Lyons I, Lyons II and Vienne. By 'crusades' here, and in the rest of the article, I am taking into consideration only the expeditions that had as their objective the recovery of Jerusalem and the Holy Land, therefore not the various other secondary forms of crusading (see above p. 1).

12 N.P. Tanner (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, London and Washington, DC, 1990.

13 Wolter, 'Elements' (see note 1), pp. 116 and 131–2.

14 R.G. Villoslada, *La Universidad de Paris durante los Estudios de Francisco de Vitoria O.P., 1507–1522* (*Analecta Gregoriana*, vol. 14, Rome, 1938); R. Rouquette, 'Ignace de Loyola dans le Paris intellectuel du XVI[e] siècle', *Études* 290 (1956), pp. 18–40; G. Shurhammer, *Francis Xavier: His Life, His Times*, trans. M.J. Costelloe (Rome, 1973–82), vol. 1, pp. 247–53; Dalmases, *Ignatius of Loyola* (see note 7), pp. 106–25; J.K. Farge, *Orthodoxy and Reform in Early Reformation France: The Faculty of Theology of Paris, 1500–1543* (Leiden, 1985).

15 J. Calveras, 'Estudios sobre la redacción de los textos latinos de los Ejercicios anteriores a la Vulgata', *Archivum Historicum Societatis lesu*, xxxi (1962), pp. 48–9 and 98–9; Dalmases, *Ignatius of Loyola* (see note 7), pp. 64–5 and 124–5.

16 Dalmases, *Ignatius of Loyola* (see note 7), pp. 85–105.

17 *Ibid*, pp. 28–84; P. de Leturia, *Inigo de Loyola*, translated by A.J. Owen (Chicago, IL), pp. 27–160.

18 E. Friedberg (ed.), *Corpus Iuris Canonici* (Leipzig, 1879; facsimile edn., Graz, 1955).

19 Tanner, *Decrees* (see note 12), p. 594.

20 *Ibid*, p. 228.

21 *Ibid*, pp. 188, 275, 307 and 335.

22 *Ibid*, pp. 188, 229, 275–6, 306–7 and 334–5; A. García y García (ed.), *Constitutiones Concilii quarti Lateranensis una cum Commentariis glossatorum* (*Monumenta Iuris Canonici*, series A, vol. 2, Vatican City, 1981), p. 20.

23 Tanner, *Decrees* (see note 12), pp. 191–2.

24 *Ibid*, pp. 267–71.

25 *Ibid*, pp. 297–301 and 309–12.

26 *Ibid*, pp. 350–4.

27 *Ibid*, pp. 609–14 and 650–5.

28 *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius*, trans. T. Corbishley (London, 1963), pp. 42–3, with minor adaptations.

29 Tanner, *Decrees* (see note 12), pp. 267–9.

30 *Ibid*, pp. 269–71.

31 *Ibid*, p. 654.

32 *Ibid*, pp. 654–5.

Chapter 2

Reception of the First Seven Ecumenical Councils by Medieval and Later General Councils of the Western Church

[This chapter was delivered as a paper at the Oxford Patristics Conference in August 1995 and subsequently published in the proceedings of the conference: E.A. Livingstone (ed.), *Studia Patristica*, xxix (1997), pp. 148–52. The copyright belongs to the publisher of the volume, Peeters of Leuven.]

1 N.P. Tanner (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* (2 vols., London and Washington, DC, 1990) – hereafter referred to as *Decrees.*
2 *Ibid*, p. 538.
3 *Ibid*, p. 662.
4 *Ibid*, p. 802.
5 *Ibid*, pp. 230 and 570–1.
6 *Ibid*, p. 442.
7 *Ibid*, p. 496.
8 *Ibid*, pp. 538–40 and 556–7.
9 For the medieval period and the attempted clarifications of the Counter-Reformation epoch, see H.J. Sieben, *Die Konzilsidee des lateinischen Mittelalters* (*847–1378*) (Paderborn, 1984), pp. 253–62; *Traktate und Theorien zum Konzil vom Beginn des Grossen Schismas bis zum Vorabend der Reformation* (*1378–1521*) (Frankfurt am Main, 1983), pp. 113–32; L. Bermejo, *Church*, *Conciliarity and Communion* (Anand, 1990), pp. 68–90.
10 *Decrees*, pp. 83–5, 108–13, 124–7 and 133–4.
11 For medieval knowledge of the early councils see also H.J. Sieben, *Die Konzilsidee*, *op cit*, pp. 83–9 and 234–59.
12 *Decrees*, p. 191.
13 *Ibid*, p. 696.
14 *Ibid*, pp. 197 and 749.
15 *Ibid*, pp. 539, 556 and 588.
16 *Ibid*, p. 563.
17 *Ibid*, pp. 775 and 891.
18 *Ibid*, p. 892.

Chapter 3

Pastoral Care: The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215

[This chapter was first published as chapter 14 in G.R. Evans, *A History of Pastoral Care* (London and New York, 2000). The copyright for the original version is hereby acknowledged.]

1. The decrees of the council (in English translation as well as in the Latin original) and other references in this chapter, unless otherwise stated, are to be found in N.P. Tanner (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* (1990) (hereafter, Tanner, *Decrees*), vol. 1, pp. 227–71. The phrase 'pastoral care' (*cura pastoralis*) does not appear in the decrees. This poses an obvious problem of definition. Still, there is quite sufficient overlap between the modern understanding of pastoral care and the concerns of the council for the phrase to be used meaningfully.
2. Tanner, *Decrees*, vol. 1, p. 297.
3. *Ibid*, vol. 1, p. 220.
4. Quoted in W. Pantin, *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1955), pp. 164–5.
5. *Tractatus pro defensione Benedicti XIII,* ch. 26, quoted in E. Martène and U. Durand, *Thesaurus novus anecdotum* (Paris, 1717), vol. 2, p. 1457.

Chapter 4

The Council of Florence, 1439–45

[This chapter was first published in A. Hastings (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 242–3. The copyright for the original version, belonging to Oxford University Press, is hereby acknowledged.]

Chapter 5

The Council of Trent, 1545–63

[This chapter was first published in A. Hastings (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 714–5. The copyright for the original version, belonging to Oxford University Press, is hereby acknowledged.]

Chapter 6

The Reformation and Regionalism: Further Reflections on the Church in Late Medieval Norwich

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1 N. Tanner, *The Church in Late Medieval Norwich*, *1370–1532* (Pontifical Institute

of Medieval Studies, Studies and Texts 66, Toronto, 1984) – subsequently referred to as Tanner, *Norwich*.

2 P. Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London, 1967), pp. 127, 141, 186–7 and 213; J.T. Evans, *Seventeenth Century Norwich* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 84–104.

3 See especially J. Delumcau, *Naissance et affirmation de la Réforme*, Nouvelle Clio 30 (2nd edn., Paris, 1968); *Le Catholicisme entre Luther et Voltaire*, Nouvelle Clio, 30 bis (Paris, 1971), trans. J. Moiser as *Catholicism between Luther and Voltaire* (London, 1977); F. Rapp, *L'Église et la vie religieuse en Occident à la fin du Moyen Age*, Nouvelle Clio 25 (2nd edn., Paris, 1980); J. Bossy, *Christianity in the West 1400–1700* (Oxford, 1985).

4 J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford, 1984), *passim*, especially pp. 61–8.

5 R. Whiting, 'Abominable Idols: Images and Image-Breaking under Henry VIII', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, xxxiii (1982), 46–7.

6 Around 12,000 in 1300, dipping with the Black Death and rising to around 10,000 by the 1520s, very approximately. J. Campbell, 'Norwich', in M. Lobel (ed.) *Historic Towns* (London, 1975), pp. 16–18; Tanner, *Norwich*, pp. xvi and 21.

7 Tanner, *Norwich*, pp. 2–5 and 173–8.

8 *Ibid*, pp. 18–23.

9 *Ibid*, p. 23.

10 *Ibid*, pp. 58 and 198–202.

11 *Ibid*, pp. 64–6 and 202–3.

12 *Ibid*, pp. 67–82 and 204–10.

13 *Ibid*, pp. 114–7 and 224–5.

14 *Ibid*, pp. 126–9.

15 *Ibid*, pp. 91–104 and 220–1; E. Phelps-Brown and S. Hopkin, 'Seven Centuries of Building Wages', in *Essays in Economic History*, ed. E. Carus-Wilson (London, 1954–62), ii, p. 177.

16 Tanner, *Norwich*, pp. 119–20

17 *Ibid*, pp. 118 and 222.

18 *Ibid*, pp. 141–54.

19 *Ibid*, pp. 152–6.

20 *Ibid*, pp. 5–7 and 158.

21 *Ibid*, pp. 23–4.

22 *Ibid*, p. 25–6.

23 *Ibid*, p. 25.

24 *Ibid*, pp. 162–6; N. Tanner (ed.), *Heresy Trials in the Diocese of Norwich*, *1428–1431*, Royal Historical Society, Camden 4th series, 20 (London, 1977), pp. 35–8, 43 –50, 60 and 195.

25 Tanner, *Norwich*, pp. 101 and 220–1.

26 *Ibid*, pp. 23 and 170.

27 *Ibid*, pp. 163–4; R. Houlbrooke, 'Persecution of Heresy and Protestantism in the

Diocese of Norwich under Henry VIII', *Norfolk Archaeology*, xxxv (1970–73), pp. 312–25.

28 Tanner, *Norwich*, pp. 9–10 and 51–3.

29 See above, p. 46.

30 Tanner, *Norwich,* pp. 138–40 and 222–3.

31 *Ibid*, pp. 167–9.

32 *Ibid*, pp. 29–30. The figures are largely based on the numbers who were styled *magistri* in the records of their appointments to benefices in the episcopal registers. References to university degrees in the registers themselves, as well as other evidence, suggest that the title was indeed generally used consistently to signify a university graduate. Twenty-two of the parishes had rectors or vicars for all or part of the period 1370 to 1532; (unbeneficed) parish chaplains were in charge of the others. *Ibid*, p. 29, note 204.

33 *Ibid*, pp. 31–5 and 191–2; John Bale, *Scriptorum illustrium maioris Brytannie catalogus* (Basel, 1557), i, pp. 473–4, 478, 495, 516–7, 527–8, 532, 534–5, 539–40, 555, 563, 579, 585–6, 592–3, 597, 612–3, 629–30, and ii, pp. 53, 59, 61–2, 80, 87–8, 91, 155–6.

34 Tanner, *Norwich*, pp. 31 and 190.

35 *Ibid*, pp. 31 and 33, quoting from: Norfolk Record Office (in Norwich), Probate Records, Registered copies of wills proved in the Norwich Consistory Court (subsequently referred to as NCC), Register Ryxe (1504–7), fol. 386^{r}, for Cursons's will; Lambeth Palace Library (in London), Register of Archbishop Morton 2 (1486–1500), fol.23^{v}, for Elys's will. The spelling of the quotations has been modernized.

36 Tanner, *Norwich*, pp. 35–42, 110–2 and 193–7.

37 *Ibid*, p. 112, quoting NCC, Register A. Caston (1479–1488), fols. 163^{v} – 164^{r}.

38 W. Pantin, *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1955), pp. 253–61; 'Instructions for a Devout and Literate Layman', in J.G. Alexander and M. Gibson (eds.), *Medieval Learning and Literature: Essays presented to Richard William Hunt* (Oxford, 1976), pp. 398–422.

39 E. Colledge and J. Walsh (eds.) *A Book of Showings to the Anchoress Julian of Norwich* (Toronto, 1978), pp. 41–51.

40 Tanner, *Norwich*, chs. 1 and 2 and Conclusion (pp. 1–112 and 167–71).

41 See above, p. 48.

42 V. Morgan, 'Cambridge University and "The Country" 1560–1640', in L. Stone (ed.), *The University in Society* (London, 1975), i, pp. 196–7, 205, 208, 218–9, 221 and 241.

43 Tanner, *Norwich*, pp. 29–33, 39, 44, 46–7, 55, 124 and 235.

44 See J. Gray, 'Canon Law in England: some reflections on the Stubbs-Maitland Controversy', in G.J. Cumming (ed.), *Studies in Church History*, iii (Leiden, 1968), pp. 48–68.

45 J.A.F. Thomson, *The Later Lollards 1414–1520* (Oxford, 1965), p. 2 and *passim*.

46 Perhaps the best study remains J. Toussaert, *Le sentiment religieux en Flandre à la fin du Moyen Age* (Paris, 1960).

47 F.M. Powicke and C.R. Cheney (eds.) *Councils and Synods*, *1205–1313* (Oxford, 1964), pp. 342–64, 498–501 and 802; D. Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae* (London, 1737), i, p. 708, and ii, p. 25.

48 C. Woodforde, *The Norwich School of Glass-Painting in the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford, 1950).

49 N. Davis (ed.), *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*, EETS Supplementary Text 1 (Oxford, 1970), pp. xxvi–xxxi.

50 See above, pp. 44–5.

51 Tanner, *Norwich*, pp. 24–5.

52 This is suggested by the monks' surnames, many of which were the names of places within or near the priory's estates (*ibid*, p. 25).

53 Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, book 1, chs. 17–18 and 43, ed. S. Meech and H. Allen, EETS 212, (London, 1940), pp. 38–40, 42–3 and 102.

54 *Ibid*, book 1, chs. 26 and 43, ed. Meech, pp. 60 and 102; Tanner, *Norwich*, pp. 88–90.

55 See especially the will registers of the Norwich Consistory Court and of the Archdeacon of Norwich's Court (Norfolk Record Office, Norwich).

56 Tanner, *Norwich*, pp. 70–80.

57 *Ibid*, p. 71.

58 Wider studies do exist, for example M. Vale, *Piety*, *Charity and Literacy among the Yorkshire Gentry 1370–1480*, Borthwick Papers 50 (York, 1976); P.W. Fleming, 'Charity, Faith and the Gentry of Kent 1422–1529', in A.J. Pollard (ed.), *Property and Politics*: *Essays in Later Medieval English History* (Gloucester, 1984), pp. 36–58. But these are studies of particular groups within a region. There is, so far as I am aware, no general study of religion in a region of medieval England.

59 Tanner, *Norwich*, pp. 19–35.

60 *Ibid*, pp. 57–66.

61 For some comparisons, see *ibid*, pp. 113–140. The best analysis for another city is, J.A.F. Thomson, 'Piety and Charity in Late Medieval London', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, xvi (1965), 178–95.

62 P. Heath, 'Urban Piety in the Later Middle Ages: the Evidence of Hull Wills', in R.B. Dobson (ed.), *The Church, Politics and Patronage in the Fifteenth Century* (Gloucester, 1984), p. 229.

63 Tanner, *Norwich*, pp. 68–73; G. Unwin, *The Gilds and Companies of London* (4th edn., London, 1963), pp. 155–217; *The Victoria History of the County of York: The City of York*, (Oxford, 1961), pp. 95–7 and 481–3; D. Palliser, 'The Trade Guilds of Tudor York', in P. Clark and P. Slack (eds.), *Crisis and Order in English Towns 1500–1700* (London, 1972), pp. 96 and 110; C. Phythian-Adams, 'Ceremony and the Citizens: The Communal Year in Coventry', in *ibid*, pp. 57–85.

64 Thomson, *The Later Lollards*, pp. 20–47, 110–16 and 139–71.

65 Tanner, *Norwich*, p. 16.

Chapter 7

Religious Practice in Norwich

[This chapter was first published as chapter 6 in Carole Rawcliffe and Richard Wilson (eds.), *Medieval Norwich* (London and New York, 2004). The copyright of the publisher is hereby acknowledged.]

Abbreviations

NA = *Norfolk Archaeology*

NCC = Norwich Consistory Court

NRO = Norfolk Record Office

NRS = Norfolk Record Society

RCN = W. Hudson and J.C. Tingey (eds.), *The Records of the City of Norwich* (2 vols., Norwich, 1906–10)

Tanner, *CLMN* = Norman Tanner, *The Church in Late Medieval Norwich*, *1370–1532* (Toronto, 1984).

1. E. Colledge and J. Walsh, eds, *A Book of Showings to the Anchoress Julian of Norwich* (2 vols., Toronto, 1978), long text, ch. 27, p. 405; 'alle shalle be wele, and alle shalle be wele, and alle manner of thynge shalle be wele'.
2. E. Rutledge, 'Immigration and Population Growth in Early Fourteenth-Century Norwich: Evidence from the Tithing Roll', *Urban History Yearbook* (1988), p. 27; J. Campbell, *Norwich*, in M. Lobel (ed.), *Historic Towns II* (London, 1975), pp. 9, 16–17.
3. S.K. Cohn, *Death and Property in Siena, 1205–1800: Strategies for the Afterlife* (Baltimore, MD, 1988); D. Waley, *Siena and the Sienese in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1991); D. Norman (ed.), *Siena Florence and Padua: Art, Society and Religion, 1280–1400* (2 vols., New Haven, CT, 1995).
4. Colledge and Walsh, *Book of Showings,* long text, ch. 27, p. 405.
5. C. Abbott, *Julian of Norwich: Autobiography and Theology* (Woodbridge, 1999), provides a good summary of modern scholarship on the remarkable anchoress. Its bibliography lists 50 books and articles about her and her *Revelations,* the large majority of them written since 1980.
6. Colledge and Walsh, *Book of Showings*; Julian of Norwich, *A Revelation of Love,* ed. M. Glasscoe (rev. edn., Exeter, 1993); G.R. Crampton (ed.), *The Shewings of Julian of Norwich* (Kalamazoo, MI, 1993).
7. R. Llewelyn (ed.), *Enfolded in Love: Daily Readings with Julian of Norwich* (London, 1980 onwards), see back cover of the latest reprint for sales.
8. Abbott, *Julian of Norwich,* pp. 22 (playful lover), 118 (heaven), 119 (transformation), 164–78 (pastoral concern).
9. S.B. Meech (ed.), *The Book of Margery Kempe*, Early English Text Society, ccxii (London, 1940), pp. 42–3; Tanner, *CLMN*, pp. 58–64, 83, 90.

10. Abbott, *Julian of Norwich*, pp. xi–xiii, 1–2.
11. Tanner, *CLMN*, pp. 58–64.
12. The Scrope family was noted for its piety and connections with an eremitical revival in the north: see J. Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries: Religion and Secular Life in Late Medieval Yorkshire* (Woodbridge, 1988).
13. John Bale, *Scriptorum illustrium maioris Brytannie catalogus* (Basel, 1557), pp. 334, 629–30; Tanner, *CLMN,* pp. 59–60.
14. E. Brown and S. Hopkins, 'Seven Centuries of Building Wages', in E. Carus-Wilson (ed.), *Essays in Economic History* (2 vols., London, 1962), ii, p. 177.
15. NRO, NCC, reg. Surflete, fo. 86^{v} (Baxter); reg. Jekkys, fos 15^{v}–16^{r} (Ferneys); Tanner, *CLMN*, pp. 60–2, 199, 202, 233–4.
16. Tanner, *CLMN*, pp. 130–1, 223.
17. Tannner, *CLMN*, pp. 64–6. (See also pp. 323–4, above). The importance of the North Sea connection, and indeed of the vibrant religious life of Norwich, is stressed by C. Baswell, 'Aeneas in 1381', in R. Copeland, D. Lawton and W. Scase (eds.), *New Medieval Literatures* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 23–40.
18. For a discussion of religious life in late medieval English towns, see G. Rosser, 'Urban Culture and the Church 1300–1540', in D.M. Palliser (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, i*, 600–1540* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 335–69.
19. A. Farley and H. Ellis, (eds.), *Domesday Book* (4 vols., London, 1783–1816), ii, p. 117.
20. A total of 25,000 inhabitants for some 50 parish churches averages 500 parishioners for each, not taking into account the cathedral and the churches of the friaries and the smaller religious houses and hospitals.
21. Tanner, *CLMN*, pp. 2–3.
22. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Tanner 100, fos 40^{r}–42^{v}, printed in Tanner, *CLMN,* pp. 179–88.
23. A. Watkin (ed.), *Inventory of Church Goods temp. Edward III* (NRS, xix, in 2 vols, 1947–8), i, pp. 1–27; Tanner, *CLMN*, pp. 5, 8–9; W.H. St John Hope, 'Inventories of the Parish Church of St Peter Mancroft, Norwich', *NA*, xiv (1901), pp. 153–240.
24. Tanner, *CLMN*, pp. 126–9, 223.
25. J. Alexander and P. Binski (eds.), *Age of Chivalry*: *Art in Plantagenet England, 1200–1400* (London, 1987), no. 711.
26. See especially W. J. Courtenay, *Schools and Scholars in Fourteenth-Century England* (Princeton, NJ, 1987), chs. 2–4.
27. (For the friaries, see Ch. 4, above.) For schools in Norwich, see P. Cattermole, 'Schools in Medieval and Early Tudor Norwich', in P. Cattermole and R. Harries (eds.), *A History of Norwich School* (Norwich, 1991), pp. 1–22; J. Greatrex, 'The Almonry School of Norwich Cathedral Priory in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries', in D. Wood (ed.), *The Church and Childhood*, (Studies in Church History, xxx, 1994), pp. 169–81; Tanner, *CLMN,* pp. 32–5; N. Orme, *English Schools in the Middle Ages* (London, 1973), pp. 144, 230–31.

28. Tanner, *CLMN*, p. 34; Leslie Stephens and Sidney Lee (eds.), *Dictionary of National Biography* (London, 1885–1900), Adam Easton.
29. Tanner, *CLMN*, pp. 28–30.
30. NRO, NCC, reg. Gylys, fos 181^{r}–183^{V} (Baker); Tanner, *CLMN*, pp. 35–7, 237–40.
31. Tanner, *CLMN,* pp. 37–42.
32. C. Rawcliffe, *Medicine for the Soul: The Life, Death and Resurrection of an English Medieval Hospital* (Stroud, 1999), ch. 4; Tanner, *CLMN*, pp. 111–12; M.C. Erler, *Women, Reading and Piety in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 68–84.
33. Tanner, *CLMN*, pp. 92–104; Rawcliffe, *Medicine for the Soul*, pp. 119–26; R. Ward, 'The Foundation and Function of Perpetual Chantries in the Diocese of Norwich, 1250–1547' (University of Cambridge PhD thesis, 1999), pp. 70–1, 101–19; C. Burgess, '"For the Increase of Divine Service": Chantries in the Parish in Late Medieval Bristol', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, xxxvi (1985), 46–65.
34. Tanner, *CLMN*, pp. 27–8, 85–7, 101–2; G. Hay, 'Pilgrims and the Hospice', *The Venerabile*, xxi (1962), 109–44.
35. Meech, *Book of Margery Kempe,* pp. 60, 102.
36. Tanner, *CLMN*, pp. 88–90, 231–2.
37. W.T. Bensly, 'St Leonard's, Norwich', *NA*, xii (1895), pp. 198–201; M.R.V. Heal, 'Veneration and Renovation at a Small Norfolk Priory: St Leonard's, Norwich in the Later Middle Ages', *Historical Research*, lxxvi (2003), pp. 431–9. For pilgrimage in Norfolk, see E. Duffy, 'The Dynamics of Pilgrimage in Late Medieval England' and C. Rawcliffe, 'Curing Bodies and Healing Souls: Pilgrimage and the Sick in Medieval East Anglia', both in C. Morris and R. Roberts (eds.), *Pilgrimage: The English Experience from Becket to Bunyan* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 164–77 and 108–40 respectively.
38. Tanner, *CLMN*, pp. 67–82, 204–20.
39. *RCN*, ii, p. 287; Tanner, *CLMN*, pp. 68–71.
40. N. Davis (ed.), *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*, Early English Text Society, supplementary text I, (London, 1970), pp. xxii–xl, 8–18; Tanner, *CLMN*, pp. 71–3; see also G.M. Gibson, *The Theater of Devotion*: *East Anglian Drama and Society in the Late Middle Ages* (Chicago, IL, 1989).
41. M.Q. Smith, 'The Roof Bosses in Norwich Cathedral and Their Relation to Medieval Drama in the City', *NA*, xxxii (1961), pp. 12–26; M.D. Anderson, *Drama and Imagery in English Medieval Churches* (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 87–8.
42. M. Grace (ed.), *Records of the Gild of St George in Norwich, 1389–1547* (NRS, ix, 1937); Tanner, *CLMN*, pp. 73–82; B.R. McRee, 'Charity and Gild Solidarity in Late Medieval England', *Journal of British Studies,* xxxii (1993), pp. 200, 214, 219–25; 'Religious Gilds and Civic Order: The Case of Norwich in the Late Middle Ages', *Speculum*, lxvii (1992), pp. 69–97.
43. G. Unwin, *The Gilds and Companies of London* (4th edn., London, 1963), pp. 155–217, 367–70; B. Pullan, *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 33–193.
44. [See Ch. 13 above.]

45. Tanner, *CLMN*, pp. 132–7; J.A.F. Thomson, 'Piety and Charity in Late Medieval London', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, xvi (1965), 187. Caistor may have had in mind the passage from *Corpus Iuris Canonici,* 'quicquid habent clerici pauperum est' (*Decretum Gratiani*, 2.16.1.68).
46. N. Tannner (ed.), *Heresy Trials in the Diocese of Norwich, 1428–1431*, Camden Society, 4th series, xx (London, 1977), pp. 35–8, 43–50, 60, 195.
47. See p. 87 above.
48. R. Houlbrooke, 'Persecution of Heresy and Protestantism in the Diocese of Norwich under Henry VIII', *NA*, xxxv (1970–73), pp. 308–26; Tanner, *CLMN*, pp. 162–5; Bale, *Scriptorum illustrium Maioris Brytannie Catalogus*, part 1, p. 556; John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, ed. J. Pratt (8 vols., London, 1877), iv, pp. 620–1, 642–3, 652, 773, and after p. 778 'Documents Relating to Thomas Bilney'; Blomefield, *Norfolk*, iii, p. 199; ix, p. 461; Thomas More, 'Preface' to *The Confutation of Tyndale's Answer,* ed. L.A. Schuster *et al*, *The Complete Works of St Thomas More* (New Haven, CT, 1963–), viii, p. 23.
49. Despenser, see Thomas Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana*, ed. H.T. Riley (2 vols., Rolls Series, 1863–4), ii, pp. 188–9. Wakeryng, see Foxe, *Acts*, iii, pp. 584–6, 848. Alnwick, see Tanner, *Heresy Trials*, pp. 8–9 and *passim*. Brown, see E.F. Jacob, 'Thomas Brouns, Bishop of Norwich, 1436–1445', in H. Trevor-Roper (ed.), *Essays in British History Presented to Sir Keith Feiling* (London and New York, 1964), p. 66. Nykke, see Houlbrooke, 'Persecution of Heresy', pp. 309–13.
50. J.A.F. Thomson, *The Later Lollards, 1414–1520* (Oxford, 1965), ch. 5; Tanner, *Heresy Trials, passim.*
51. *Idem,* pp. 8, 23.
52. Houlbrooke, 'Persecution of Heresy', pp. 322–3.
53. See Carole Rawcliffe and Richard Wilson (eds.), *Norwich Since 1500* (Hambledon and London, 2004), ch. 2.
54. See especially C. Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire* (Cambridge, 1975); *English Reformations: Religion, Politics and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford, 1993); J.J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford, 1984); E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400–c. 1580* (New Haven, CT, 1992).
55. Fro a fuller treatment of this argument, see N. Tanner, 'The Reformation and Regionalism: Further Reflections on the Church in Late Medieval Norwich', in J.A.F. Thomson, ed., *Towns and Townspeople in the Fifteenth Century* (Gloucester, 1988), pp. 129–47.
56. I. Atherton *et al* (eds.), *Norwich Cathedral*, pp. 259–69. The circumstances of this display of civic antagonism (but not violence) towards the priory are discussed in C. Humphrey, *The Politics of Carnival* (Manchester, 2001), ch. 3.
57. Thomas of Monmouth, *The Life and Miracles of St William of Norwich,* ed., A. Jessopp and M.R. James (Cambridge, 1896), *passim*; G.I. Langmuir, 'Thomas of Monmouth: Detector of Ritual Murder', *Speculum*, lvi (1984), 820–56;

A.L. Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta, 1087–1216* (Oxford, 1951), pp. 353–4.

58. Tanner, *CLMN,* pp. 5–10, 51–4; C. Harper-Bill (ed.), *The Register of John Morton Archbishop of Canterbury, 1486–1500* (Canterbury and York Society, lxxxix, 2000), nos. 276–81.
59. Atherton *et al* (eds.), *Norwich Cathedral,* pp. 255–80, especially 270, 274, 280; Tanner, *CLMN*, pp. 5–10, 51–4; Langmuir, 'Thomas of Monmouth', pp. 838, 842–3.
60. Tanner, *CLMN*, pp. 18–21.
61. Tanner, *CLMN*, pp. 21–3.
62. Geoffrey Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, ed. L.D. Benson (Oxford, 1988), Prologue, lines 507–11, p. 31; William Langland, *Piers Plowman*, ed. J.A. Bennett (Oxford, 1972), B. Text, Prologue, lines 83–6, p. 3.
63. Tanner, *CLMN*, pp. 24–8. (For Norwich's nuns, see Chapter 4, above).

Chapter 8

Sources for Popular Religion in Late Medieval England

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1 'Between Reform and Reformation: The English Church in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, XLI, 1990, pp. 647–78.
2 E. Colledge and J. Walsh, *A Book of Showings to the Anchoress Julian of Norwich* (2 vols., Toronto, 1978).
3 Williel Thomson (ed.), *The Latin Writings of John Wyclif: An Annotated Catalogue* (Toronto, 1983).
4 A. Kenny (ed.), *Wyclif in his Times* (Oxford, 1986); A. Hudson and M. Wilks (eds.), *From Ockham to Wyclif* , Studies in Church History, Subsidia 5 (Oxford, 1987).
5 G. Gàl *et al* (eds.), *Guillelmi de Ockham Opera Philosophica et Theologica*, (17 vols., St. Bonaventure, NY, 1967–88); K. Balić *et al*, (eds.), *Ioannis Duns Scoti Opera Omnia*, vols. 1–7 and 16–19 (Vatican City, 1950–).
6 *William Ockham* (2 vols., Notre Dame, IN, 1987). Note also A.J. Freddoso and F.E. Kelley, (trans.), *William of Ockham: Quodlibetal Questions* (2 vols., New Haven CT, 1991).'
7 Cf, for example, S.J. McEntire (ed.), *Margery Kempe*: *A Book of Essays* (New York, 1992), including the bibliography.
8 *Pastors and Visionaries*: *Religion and Secular Life in Late Medieval Yorkshire* (Woodbridge, 1988); *Anchorites and Their Patrons in Medieval England* (Berkeley, CA, 1985).

9 E. Le Roy Ladurie (trans.), *Montaillou*, (London, 1978); J. Edwards, 'Religious Faith and Doubt in Late Medieval Spain: Storia circa 1450–1500', *Past and Present*, CXX, 1988, 3–25, and for the ensuing debate, cf *ibid* 128, 1990, pp. 152–61; S. Reynolds, *Social Mentalities and the Case of Medieval Scepticism*, Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 6th series, I, 1991, 21–41; C. Ginzburg, *Il formaggio e i vermi. Il cosmo di un mugnaio del 1500* (Turin, 1976), trans.: *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, London 1988.

10 *De Heidense Middeleeuwen* (Brussels, 1991).

11 R.J. Catto and T. Evans, (eds.), *The History of the University of Oxford*, 2: *Late Medieval Oxford* (Oxford, 1992), chs. 1–6; W.J. Courtenay, *Schools and Scholars in Fourteenth-Century England* (Princeton, NJ, 1987).

12 'William White's Lollard Followers', *Catholic Historical Review*, LXVIII, 1982, 469–497, reprinted in her *Lollards and Reformers* (London 1984), 101–33.

13 *English Wycliffite Sermons* (Oxford, 1983–).

14 D. Knowles and D. Obolensky, *The Christian Centuries*, 2: *The Middle Ages* (London, 1969), p. 451; O. Chadwick, 'The Reformation', in O. Chadwick (gen. ed.), *The Pelican History of the Church*, III (Harmondsworth, 1964), pp. 14–15.

15 *Religious Change under Henry V*, in G.L. Harriss (ed.), *Henry V*: *The Practice of Kingship* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 114–15: *Late Medieval Oxford*, cit., ch. 12.

16 *Religious Change under Henry V*, cit., pp. 97–115.

17 Catto, *Late Medieval Oxford*, cit., D.R. Leader, *A History of the University of Cambridge*, 1: *The University to 1546* (Cambridge, 1988).

18 *English Schools in the Middle Ages*, London 1973; *The Growth of English Schooling, 1340–1548*: *Learning*, *Literacy and Laicization in Pre-Reformation York Diocese* (Princeton, CT, 1985).

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20 *Religious and intellectual interests at St. Edmunds Abbey at Bury and the nature of English Benedictinism, c.1350–1450* (1995).

21 As expressed in his classic work *The Religious Orders in England,* vols. 2 and 3, Cambridge 1955 and 1959.

22 The view, to over-simplify, that the late medieval Church in England, as in the rest of Western Christendom, was in a thoroughly decadent state, crying out for reform, and that the Reformation was welcomed by a large majority of the people.

23 J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford, 1984); E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*: *Traditional Religion in England c. 1400-c. 1580* (New Haven, CT, 1992); C. Haigh, *English Reformations*: *Religion*, *Politics and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford, 1993).

24 Cf reviews of Duffy's book (*The Stripping*, cit.) by: Sir Keith Thomas in *The Observer*, 13 December 1992; N. Tanner in *The Times*, 24 December 1992; Peter Heath in *The Times Literary Supplement*, 15 January 1993.

25 Cf J. Gray, 'Canon Law in England: some reflections on the Stubbs-Maitland controversy', *Studies in Church History*, III, (1966), pp. 46–68; B. Ferme, 'The

Canon Law Culture of Medieval England', *Periodica de Re Canonica*, LXXXII (1993), pp. 27–54, especially pp. 36–43.

26 For the latter, the seminal work remains R.W. Pfaff, *New Liturgical Feasts in Late Medieval England* (Oxford, 1970).

27 Cf G. Rosser, 'Parochial Conformity and Voluntary Religion in Late-Medieval England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th series, I (1991), pp. 173–89.

28 Cf N. Tanner, *The Reformation and Regionalism*: *Further reflections on the Church in late medieval Norwich*, in J.A.F. Thomson (ed.), *Towns and Townspeople in the Fifteenth Century* (Gloucester, 1988), pp. 141–5.

29 *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Oxford, 1991), which concentrates on Anglo-Saxon England.

30 Cf *supra*, note 11, chs. 1, 5 and 6. See also W.J. Courtenay, as in note 11.

31 *Lectura Secunda in Librum Primum Sententiarum* (3 vols., St. Bonaventure, NY, 1990).

32 For a general survey, cf her *England*, *Rome and the Papacy 1417–1464*: *The study of a relationship* (Manchester, 1993).

33 'Syon Abbey and its Religious Publications in the Sixteenth Century', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, XLIV (1993), 11–25.

34 The best guide is A.J. Camp, *Wills and Their Whereabouts* (London, 1974).

Chapter 9

Penances Imposed on Kentish Lollards by Archbishop Warham Warham, 1511–12

[This article was first published as ch. 11 in Margaret Aston and Colin Richmond (eds.), *Lollardy and the Gentry in the Later Middle Ages* (Stroud, 1997). The copyright for the original publication is hereby acknowledged.]

1 The register is kept in Lambeth Palace Library, London. The relevant folios run 159^{r}–167^{v}, 167$^{*r–v}$, 168^{r}–175^{v}. Hereafter references to the register are given by folio numbers only. For recent discussions of the proceedings, see J.A.F. Thomson, *The Later Lollards 1414–1520* (Oxford, 1965), pp. 183–90 and Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 134–6, 143, 150–1 and 156. For John Foxe's treatment, see John Foxe, *The Acts and Monuments,* ed. J. Pratt, (4th edn., London, 1877), iv, pp. 181–2 and 722–3, and v, pp. 647–54.

2 Subsequently published as *Kent Heresy Proceedings 1511–12*, N. Tanner, Kent Records, 26 (Kent Archaeological Society, Maidstone, 1997).

3 Thomson, *The Later Lollards*, pp. 231–6.

4 Respectively: John Browne, Stephen Castelyn and Edward Walker; John Grebill

senior and William Carder; Christopher Grebill; John Dodde; William Bukhurst; Robert Bright; William Riche.

5 Agnes Reignold or Raynold.

6 James Bukherst, f. 167*^{r}, and William Bukherst, f. 167$^{*r–v}$.

7 Simon Piers, f. 175$^{r–v}$.

8 Ff. 171^{v}–175^{r} for the proceedings against the five persons. See Appendix 1 (above, pp. 107–8) for the sentence of Robert Harryson, which was the first of the five sentences and was followed closely, regarding its form, in the other four. See Appendix 2 (above, p. 109) for the relinquishing of Robert Harryson, William Carder and Agnes Grebill to the secular arm.

9 PRO (Public Record Office), C/85/24, nos. 20–22 and 24–25.

10 The fourth Lateran council of 1215, canon 18, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. N.P. Tanner (London, 1990), i, p. 244, *Decretales Gregorii Papae IX*, 3.50.9 *Corpus Iuris Canonici,* ed. E. Friedberg (Leipzig, 1879, reprinted Graz, 1955), ii, pp. 659–60.

11 A.B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500* (Oxford, 1957–9), iii, pp. 1988–9 (William Warham); L. Stephen and S. Lee (eds.), *Dictionary of National Biography* (London, 1885–1900), lix, pp. 378–9 (William Warham).

12 John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, iv, pp. 215–16; cf Andrew Hope, 'The Lady and the Bailiff: Lollardy among the gentry in Yorkist and early Tudor England', in Margaret Aston and Colin Richmond (eds.), *Lollardy and the Gentry in the Later Middle Ages* (Sutton, 1997), p. 262.

13 Thomson, *The Later Lollards,* p. 190.

14 *Ibid*, pp. 87–8, 162 and 238; Foxe, *Acts and Monuments,* iv, pp. 123–6, 173–82, 208 and 214–15.

15 J. Fines, 'Heresy Trials in the Diocese of Coventry and Lichfield, 1511–12', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History,* 14 (1963), 160–74; I. Luxton, 'The Lichfield Court Book: A postscript', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 44 (1971), pp. 120–5.

16 F. 170^{v}.

17 See Appendix 3 (above, p. 109).

18 Canon 3, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils,* ed. Tanner, i, p. 233.

19 Her name is omitted, though the omission may be a scribal error.

20 N. Tanner (ed.), *Heresy Trials in the Diocese of Norwich, 1428–31*, Camden Fourth Series, xx (London, 1997), p. 24.

21 F. 174^{r}.

22 Ff. 162^{r} (Stephen Castelyn), 162^{v} (William Baker and Robert Reignold), 163^{v} (Elizabeth White), 164^{r} (Thomas Churche and Joan Olberd), 165^{v} (John Lynche and Thomas Browne).

23 F. 164^{r}.

24 Ff. 167^{r} and 167^{*r}.

25 Ff. 165^{r} and 166^{r}.

26 F. 163$^{r–v}$.

27 F. 162^{r}.
28 F. 162^{v}.
29 F. 162^{r}.
30 Ff. 164^{v} and 167^{*r}.
31 See Appendix 5 (above, pp. 111–12).
32 Ff. 163^{r} (Joan Olberd), 167^{*v} (Joan Lowes), 168^{r} (Stephen Castelyn), 168^{v}–169^{r} (Robert Franke), 175^{v} (William Pelland), 175^{v} (Julian Hilles).
33 K.L. Wood-Legh (ed.), *Kentish Visitations of Archbishop William Warham and His Deputies, 1511–12*, Kent Records, 24 (Kent Archaeological Society, Maidstone, 1984), pp. xv and 40.
34 Ff. 163^{v} (Agnes Reignold), 164^{v} (Alice Hilles), 165^{r} (Joan Riche), 167^{*v}–168^{r} (Joan Lowes), 168^{v} (Julian Hilles). In four cases the word 'smock' was used, in one case *camisia.*
35 Ff. 163^{v} (Agnes Reignold), 164^{v} (Alice Hills and Margaret Baker), 168^{v} (Julian Hilles), 175^{v} (William Pelland).
36 Ff. 167^{*v}, 168^{v}, 175^{v}.
37 F. 163^{r}.
38 Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, iv, pp. 215–16. See Hope, 'The Lady and the Bailiff', p. 264.

Chapter 10

Crying 'God for Harry! England and St George!'

[This chapter was originally published in the *Church Times*, 3 December 1999, as Part 10 (covering the period 1100 to 1500) in the series 'Not Angels but Anglicans'. It was subsequently republished in Henry Chadwick and Allison Ward (eds.) *Not Angels, but Anglicans: A History of Christianity in the British Isles* (Norwich, 2000, repr. 2008), pp. 86–93. The copyrights belong to the respective publishers.]

Chapter 11

The Study of English Medieval Recluses in the Twentieth Century

[This chapter was first published in K. Nishiyama (ed.), *In Pursuit of Beauty: The Genealogy of English Romanticism: Festschrift in Honour of Professor Yasuo Deguchi* (Tokyo, 2001), pp. 15–21. The article is reproduced here with permission of the original publisher.]

Chapter 12

Canon Law in England, Hermits and Anchorites, Popular Religion

[The three articles in this chapter were first published in David Loades (ed.), *Reader's Guide to British History* (New York and London, 2003), i, pp. 218–19 and 632–4, and ii, pp. 1058–59. The copyright of the original publisher is hereby acknowledged.]

Chapter 13

Piety in the Later Middle Ages in England

[This chapter was first published as chapter 4 in Sheridan Gilley and W.J. Sheils (eds.), *A History of Religion in Britain: Practice and Belief from Pre-Roman Times to the Present* (Oxford, 1994). The copyright for the chapter is hereby acknowledged.]

Chapter 14

Private Life and the Middle Ages

[This chapter was originally published in *The Month*, September/October 1990, pp. 388–92. The copyright belongs to Trustees for Roman Catholic Purposes (114 Mount Street, London W1).]

1 P. Ariès and G. Duby (gen. eds.), *Histoire de la Vie Privée,* (5 vols., Paris, 1985–7), trans. *A History of Private Life* (Cambridge, MA, and London, 1987–); vol. 1, *From Pagan Rome to Byzantium*, ed. P. Veyne, 1987; vol. 2, *Revelations of the Medieval World,* ed. G. Duby, 1988; vol. 3, *Passions of the Renaissance,* ed. R. Charlier, 1989.

Chapter 15

Medieval Christendom and the Restoration of a Christian society

[This chapter was delivered as a paper at a conference on evangelization, and was published in *The Month*, December 1992, pp. 467–72. The copyright belongs to Trustees for Roman Catholic Purposes (114 Mount Street, London W1).]

1 See N. Tanner, 'Private life and the Middle Ages', *The Month*, (September/October 1990), p. 388.

Chapter 16

Do North Americans Understand the Middle Ages Better than Europeans?

[This chapter was first published in *America*, 2 October 1993, pp. 5–6. The copyright belongs to *America* magazine.]

Chapter 17

Sin in the Middle Ages

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Chapter 18

Making Merry in the Middle Ages

[This chapter was first published in *The Month*, September–October 1996, pp. 373–6. The copyright belongs to Trustees for Roman Catholic Purposes (114 Mount Street, London W1).]

1 no date.

2 I am grateful to the learned Maurice Healy for drawing my attention to this section. The translations that follow are taken from the Blackfriars edition, 1964–81) of the *Summa,* vol. 44 (ed. T. Gilby).

3 'Est autem contra rationem ut aliquis se aliis onerosum exhibeat, puta dum nihil delectabile exhibet, et etiam aliorum delectationes impedit. Unde Seneca dicit, "Sic te geras sapienter quod nullus te habeat tanquam asperum, nec contemnat quasi vilem." Illi autem qui in ludo deficiunt, nec ipsi dicunt aliquid ridiculum et dicentibus molesti sunt, quia scilicet moderatos aliorum ludos non recipiunt. Et ideo tales vitiosi sunt, et dicuntur "duri" et "agrestes", ut Philosophus dicit.'

The quotation from Seneca is taken from Martin of Braga's (died c.580) *Formula vitae honestae,* ch. 3 'De continentia' *(Patrologia Latina,* ed. Migne, 72, col. 26, which was based in large part, apparently, on the lost *De officiis* of Seneca. For Aristotle ('Philosophus'), see his *Nichomachean Ethics,* 4, 8:1128a4.

4 *Le sentiment religieux en Flandre* à *la fin du Moyen-Age* (Paris, 1963), pp. 357–9.

Chapter 19

Christianity vs 'Paganism'? Reflections on Medieval Europe

[This chapter was first published in *The Month*, February 2000, pp. 60–5. The copyright belongs to Trustees for Roman Catholic Purposes (114 Mount Street, London W1).]

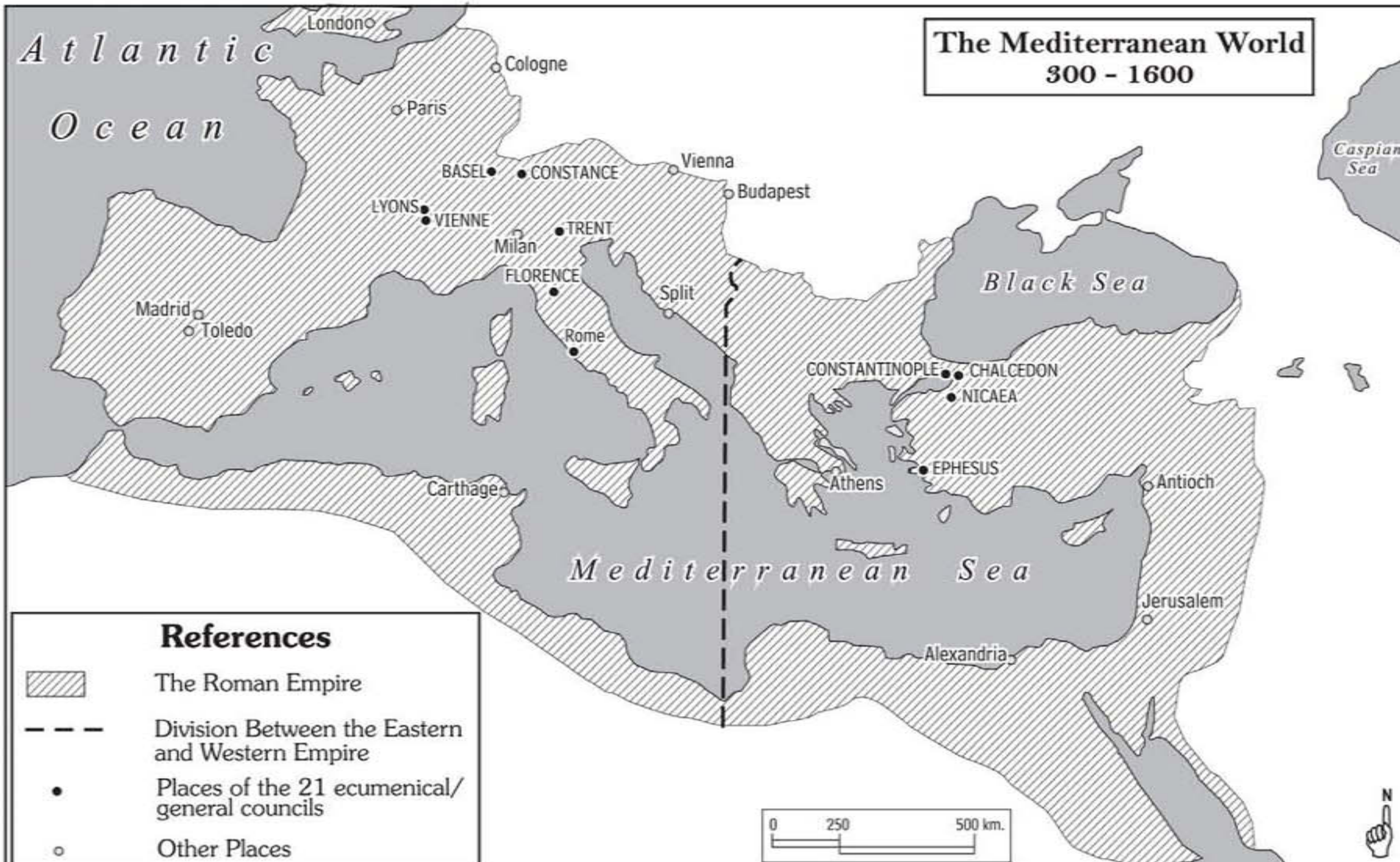
Chapter 20

Inquisition and Holy Office

[This chapter was first published in A. Hastings (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought* (Oxford 2000), p. 327. The article is reproduced here by permission of Oxford University Press.

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